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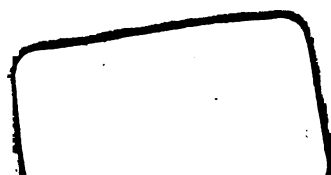
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AN  
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THE  
HISTORY  
OF THE  
LIVES  
OF  
ABEILLARD and HELOISA;

COMPRISING A PERIOD OF EIGHTY-FOUR YEARS.

From 1079 to 1163.

2/96  
WITH THEIR GENUINE  
LETTERS,

FROM THE COLLECTION OF AMBOISE.

Personne n'est obligé d'écrire l'histoire; mais quiconque l'entreprend  
s'engage à dire la vérité toute entière.

FLEURY DISC. 4.

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By the Rev. JOSEPH BERINGTON.

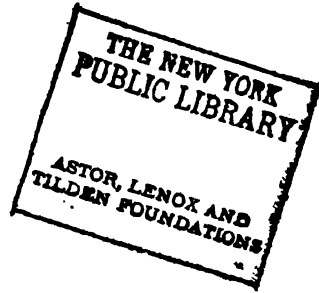
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AND R. FAULDER, NEW BOND-STREET, LONDON.

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M.DCC.LXXXVII.



WROY WEN  
CLUB  
VIA

## *The* P R E F A C E.

*T*HE *History of the Lives of Abeillard and Heloisa*, which I now offer to the public, has, in some sense, been the work of many years. No one has ever read Mr. Pope's inimitable poem, without being interested in the fate of the lovers, whose sad and tender story, he, as a poet, has told so well. This interest I felt, and I was prompted to inquire more into the real history of their lives. The first annals of the church, I could meet with, soon gave me the information I wanted, and I found that the general impression made by the poet's tale was not to be relied on. Abeillard, I saw, had not one trait of the character, he had portrayed; and that Heloisa merited a much more favourable delineation. I also discovered that they were great and conspicuous personages, who had commanded the attention of the age, and whose virtues their contemporaries even had been careful to celebrate. I then viewed the other characters, and the general events of the period, in which they lived, and they were  
b interesting

interesting, I saw, and momentous. Should I ever become an author, I thought, I would attempt *the History of the Lives of Abeillard and Heloisa*.—My motives then are laudable.

At a time, when truths of every kind are so eagerly investigated, and those of history in particular, I have chosen a dark period; and if I can bring it before the public in any form that may raise attention, my design will be satisfied. I own, I have some confidence in the imposing names of Abeillard and Heloisa.—The learned reader must not expect to find any thing absolutely new. Where ~~was I to look~~ for novelty in the records of the ~~eleventh and twelfth~~ centuries? But as I have taken ~~the liberty to~~ form my own judgment on the characters and facts, I have described, it may be that, sometimes, I shall seem to suggest new ideas, or to present an old object in a new point of view. It will be well, if some critics may not think it would have been better, I had adhered more religiously to some opinions, which age seems to have sanctioned. I would have done it, could I have been prevailed on to believe that our ancestors were not men, open to prejudice and false impressions. There are circumstances, when it is rather advantageous to be placed

placed at some distance from an object. Its light is not so dazzling, the medium is less troubled, and the eye of the spectator is more serene and steady. What errors has not the cool sagacity of modern criticism corrected in the too credulous annals of former times?

In writing the present history I had then more in view, than the bare delineation of the two principal characters: but of these I have never lost sight. It was impossible, indeed, so to draw the events of the period together, as to make them appear like branches from the leading object; for, in their origin, they were not connected with it. At any time, how little connection has the life of a literary man, and much less that of a cloistered nun, with the schemes of politicians, and the feats of warriors? What links, the then disunited state of mankind threw into the events, I trust, I have not broken; and perhaps some harmony of parts, and unity of design, may be discovered.

They who, from the title of my work, shall expect the entertainment of a novel, will be disappointed. I profess to give a genuine history; and am I to blame, if Abeillard and Heloisa were not so romantic, as the heroes of modern tales; or if their

lives were less crowded with extraordinary and incredible adventures? Heloisa, however, will sometimes, I think, be able to keep pace with the wildest flights of fancy.—But the reader must be unconscionably unreasonable in his expectations, who, whatever be his cast of character, shall not find, in such a variety of matter, something to gratify his curiosity. I have treated of love, religion, philosophy, politics, and war. The crusades are great events, and the characters of distinguished men, but little known to the generality of readers, are doubtless interesting objects.—My inability to perfect so various a plan I am not ashamed to own, and in this sentiment, I can call more confidently for indulgence.

A few years ago I translated, for my amusement, the letters of Abeillard and Heloisa, and that circumstance it was, which revived the idea, I mentioned to have before entertained, of writing their history. The sources of information were, I knew, genuine and abundant. I drew them round me; and nothing remained but to realise my favourite project.—The reader shall know what these sources were.

In

In 1616, was published, for the first time, at Paris, a complete edition of Abeillard's works. They had been collected with much care by Francis d'Amboise, a great favourite in the courts of Charles IX. and his brother Henry III. and who gradually was promoted to offices of high trust in the state. From his childhood, he says<sup>a</sup>, he had been always fond of looking into old libraries, and turning over dusty manuscripts. In some of these researches he laid his hands on the letters of Abeillard and Heloisa; he read them with much pleasure, and was induced to pursue his inquiries. He found other works of the same author; but they were ill-written, and not to be unravelled, without great labour. Nothing can withstand the indefatigable toil of a true antiquarian. Amboise procured other manuscripts: he collated them together, and finally produced one fair copy, which made ample compensation, he says, for all the labour he had taken. Even posterity, he thinks, will be grateful to him, and know how to value the pleasure and the profit, they will derive from his researches. With how partial an eye, indeed, do we contemplate our own favourite pursuits!

<sup>a</sup> Præf. Apolog. p. 2.

Not satisfied with the dear copy he possessed, Amboise still wished to enlarge it. He applied to different monasteries, and he again searched the libraries in Paris, and not without success. His friends applauded his zeal, and gave him their assistance. His manuscripts swelled to a large bulk, and he read, arranged, and selected what pleased him best. The rising sun, he says, often found him at his task. So far fortune had smiled upon his labours, and he did not doubt but soon he should be able to present the public with the rich jewel he possessed. But little was wanting to give it the last finish. Warm with the idea, he went over to the Paraclet. The abbess, Madame de Rochefoucauld, received him with the greatest politeness. He declared the motive of his journey: she took him by the hand, and led him to the tomb of Abeillard and Heloisa. Madame was his relation. Together they examined the library of the abbey; and she shewed him many hymns, and prayers, and homilies, written by their founder, which were still used in their church<sup>b</sup>.—Amboise then returned to Paris, and prepared his work for the press.

<sup>b</sup> Pref. Apolog. p. 6.



As the reputation of his author, he knew, had been much asperfed by fome contemporary writers, he wished to remove the undeserved stigma, and to present him as immaculate, as might be, before the eyes of a more difcerning age. With this view he wrote a long *apologetic preface*, which, he meant, fhould be prefixed to the work. In this preface, a composition inelegant and affected, Amboife labours much to fhew that, Abeillard was the greateft and beft man, and Heloifa the greateft and beft woman, whom the annals of human kind had recorded. He firft, very fairly, adduces the testimony of thofe, who had fpoken evil of them, whom he combats and refutes. To thefe fucceeds a lift of their admirers. He dwells on their every word, and gives more weight to their expreffions; and the result is, what we were prepared to expect from the pen of Amboife.—The compilation, however, contains fome curious matter, and may be read with pleafure. The antiquarian himfelf did not, I believe, live to fee his work before the public, for it was not printed till the year 1616, and that, as the king's licence expreffes, by Nicholas Buon.

The

The reader will find, in the course of the following history, what this edition contains. The letters form, by much, the most curious part, and at the head of these is the *Historia Calamitatum*, or the *memoirs* of his own life, which Abeillard wrote to a friend, and which I often quote. It is indeed the only genuine repository, from which many circumstances of his life can be drawn.

To these *memoirs*, Andrew du Chefne, under the affected appellation of *Quercetanus*, wrote illustrative notes, which are subjoined to Amboise's collection. They are very curious, and often throw great light on the subject.—Du Chefne lived in the last century; and, from his great researches into the history and antiquities of France, he has deserved to be stiled the father of their history. He and Amboise were friends. Some critics have ascribed the whole edition of the works of Abeillard to him; but without sufficient foundation.

It is from the authors, quoted by Amboise in his preface, or by Du Chefne in his notes, that I have taken some anecdotes, and many particular circumstances, which, intentionally, I have never failed to acknowledge. I could have no motive for appearing ungrateful to my benefactors.

Modern

Modern writers, who speak of Abeillard, have taken their materials from his memoirs, and I was surpris'd, on many occasions, to find them so inaccurate. His contemporaries treated him, as they were affected by passion, or interest, or partiality, or truth, and their opinions have been variously copied. But there is very little to be collected from the writers of the age. They were too intent on displaying the martial prowess of their masters, or on recording the extravagant pretensions of the Roman pontiffs, or on blazoning the miraculous achievements of their favourite saints, to attend to the comparatively uninteresting characters of more private life. Otho Frisingensis, Geoffrey, a monk of Clairvaux, Bernard of Citaux, and Peter the venerable, abbot of Cluni, are the writers who principally mention Abeillard.

Bayle, among the moderns, a man of vast abilities, but which he too often abused to insult religion and to injure virtue, in his *Historical and Critical Dictionary*, has entered very diffusely on the lives of Abeillard and Heloisa. Agreeably to his wonted practice he had read every thing, which history had recorded of them, and all that he retails with the greatest profusion. In his notes he pours out his

own observations, which are sometimes hazarded, and his criticisms, which are not always just. Whatever his teeming memory could, on the occasion, suggest, he heaps together; and his prurient imagination runs to modern anecdotes and ancient fables, in quest of obscenity and vulgar imagery. Modesty had never a more determined adversary to contend with. There is much, I know, to be learned from this man; but I would not look for pearls in a dunghill. On the present occasion, he has been of little use to me: the facts he relates, I could draw from their source, and I could not copy his loose digressions, or his indecent allusions.—His strictures on Heloisa are remarkably unjust, and it is clear that he wilfully misrepresented her character. Expressions in her letters, which malevolence may pervert, are to him demonstrations of her guilt, and the language of confidence and sincerity is the speech of meretricious impudence.—As his own heart, probably, was insensible to the impressions of virtue, and he could not pity distress, I am not much surpris'd at the indecency of *his* remarks, and the general flippancy of *his* pen; but that two clergymen of the church of England, should have translated the most exceptionable passages

passages of his dictionary, and should have added, by their translation, to their grossness, is not quite so pardonable.—I am not sufficiently severe either on Bayle or his translators.

In Moreri, or rather in the voluminous work which goes under his name, the life of Abeillard is very accurately given, as to its principal incidents. Some mistakes there are, which might have been easily corrected, by more attention to his own memoirs.—The more I have had occasion to examine the works of others, the more have I been convinced that histories, supposed the most authentic, are very little to be relied on. Characters misrepresented, dates mistaken, and facts mistated, are then most common, when we look for accuracy, precision, and truth. The circumstance indeed is natural; for it is, on these occasions, that the historian is most swayed by passion, by party, by prejudice. When there is no motive to mislead his judgment, or to bias his will, he will deviate less, unless his negligence or inattention be great: but in trifles, (if the business of mankind can ever be so denominated), it matters little whether truth or falsehood preponderate.—What really are the qualities to constitute the best historian, is hard to say.

To require that he should be of no country, is requiring a thing impossible; and to say that he should have no religion, is a puerile demand. The philosophical unbeliever is generally intolerant in his practice, and always prejudiced in his ideas. The race has been tried as historians without success. Till a man can be found without passions, and then he would be insipid; without prejudice, and then he would want interest; without party, and then he would not be read; we must be satisfied with such historians as the common lot of humanity can supply, and read their writings, with the same indulgence, as we do a romance. If they give us pleasure, it will be well; and the most sanguine author seldom looks for a better reward to his labours. I mean not this as any apology for my own work; for I profess to be as accurate as I can, and as truthful as the character of my records will allow.

In 1720, the lives of Abeillard and Heloisa were published in two volumes at Paris. Dom Gervaise, third abbot of la Trappe, is the author. He wrote them during his confinement at Notre-dame de Reclus, where he spent the fifty last years of his life. At the recommendation of de Rancé, first abbot.

abbot of la Trappe, and who, worn down by austerities, had surrendered his charge, Dom Gervaise was elected to the important office. By nature headstrong and impetuous, bizarre in his humour, and singular in his maxims, (dispositions, which the incessant labour and dreadful rigours of the place had not corrected), he was ill-formed to conduct an institution, which demanded a man of peace, of prudence, of constancy, of benevolence. The general regulations of the abbey he wished again to reform, and, as much as might be, to depart from the wise maxims of their founder. De Rancé saw the danger which threatened his new establishment, and he was yet able to avert it. Dom Gervaise, by an order from court, was dismissed. For some time, irritated and restless, he wandered from solitude to solitude, till, by another order, he was confined, as I just mentioned. Here, for he was a man of some abilities, and of much reading, he applied himself to the compilation of various works<sup>c</sup>.

The work before me is written with care and honesty. Dom Gervaise had leisure, and he employed it in perusing the best records. The style  
is.

<sup>c</sup> Dict. Hist.

is heavy, his reflections often uninteresting, and his periods loose, negligent, and redundant. Tho' so unhappily constituted, as I described him, still he had a mind, which was turned to piety, or he affected to appear religious and abstracted. In these dispositions he viewed Abeillard as a great saint, and such he delineates his character, and Heloisa, his wife, was not, he thinks, a less perfect pattern of all the virtues. Dom Gervaise shall speak for himself.

“ Cet Abeillard si connu, et en meme tems si  
 “ inconnu, va donc paroître au naturel dans cet  
 “ ouvrage. On le verra né avec un bel esprit, ca-  
 “ pable des sciences les plus sublimes, devenu grand  
 “ Philosophe malgré ses inclinations un peu trop  
 “ tendres: la fin tragique de son amour pour He-  
 “ loise l'ayant conduit à une généreuse pénitence.  
 “ Entré dans l'état monastique, il y paroitra un  
 “ des plus illustres abbez de son tems, et comme  
 “ un martyr par l'austerité de sa vie, et par les cru-  
 “ elles persécutions qu'il souffre pour maintenir la  
 “ discipline régulière. La grandeur de son ame,  
 “ sa patience héroïque, éclatent dans toutes ses tra-  
 “ verses. Cependant on le voit fondateur d'ordre,  
 “ législateur de loix, qui vont de pair avec celles  
 “ des



“ des Bafiles et des Pacomes; favant theologien, qui  
 “ a fouvent pris la plume pour défendre les vérités  
 “ orthodoxes attaquées de fon tems; un grand  
 “ maitre qui a formé de saints prélats, dont les  
 “ lumieres ont long tems éclairé l'eglise, qu'il a lui  
 “ meme enrichie de favans erits, dont nous avons  
 “ encore la meilleure partie. Mais la plus rare de  
 “ toutes ces grandes qualités est, qu'avec ce génie  
 “ qui lui acquit une reputation des plus etendues,  
 “ il eut la modestie et l'humilité du plus parfait  
 “ religieux.—L'enchainment des matieres, qui ne  
 “ permet pas d'écrire la vie d'Abeillard fans tracer  
 “ en meme tems celle d'Heloïse, découvre le tri-  
 “ omphe de la grace sur un cœur le plus attaché à  
 “ la créature. Sa pénitence est un exemple pour  
 “ celles qui ont eu le malheur de l'avoir fuivie dans  
 “ sa chute. Pendant vingt deux années qu'elle a  
 “ survecu à son époux, elle est un modele des ver-  
 “ tus religieuses et de conduite pour les superieures.  
 “ Enfin Heloise nous donne à douter si la vie  
 “ d'Abeillard est plus digne de nos admirations  
 “ que la sienne<sup>d</sup>.”

After this opening, which is in the true stile  
 of panegyric, I was not to expect much truth of  
 character :

<sup>d</sup>-Pref. p. 3.

character: for Abeillard, I was well aware, had more in his composition of the finner than the faint, and in Heloisa the triumphs of grace were not always so brilliant as those of nature. No views can be more opposite than those of Bayle and Gervaise; but unhappily truth never lies in the extremes. Their portraits are fancy-pieces, which may serve to delineate the minds of the artists, rather than the originals they are said to represent. I have, however, derived some advantage from Gervaise, and in general I have followed his arrangement of materials. The objects we view very differently, and consequently our works have but a faint resemblance. Whose eye be most just, the reader may determine. I can say, that I neglected nothing to clear the medium, and to fix a proper point of view.

I also procured extracts from the *Annals* of Argentré and Papire Masson, from the *History of Britany* by Lobineau, and from Pasquier's *Researches*. With these materials, joined to the information which the writers of the age supplied, I found myself in possession of all the evidence, which my subject seemed to require. As far then as any history can be pronounced genuine, the work I  
present

present to the public may, I flatter myself, be deemed so.

It has been thought by some that, I have chosen a subject which did not merit so much attention.— To the observation I know not what to reply: let the work make its own apology. It was at least benevolent in me to wish to free from obloquy two characters, that had been much aspersed; and the public, I think, should be pleased with a narration, which brings to their better acquaintance names, which so long were familiar to their ears. In common life the incident is particularly agreeable. After all, what are the important matters which may be supposed to *merit* the researches of the learned, and the notice of the public? I am not disposed to think lightly of my contemporaries, or of their tastes and pursuits; but, I trust, the history of Abeillard and Heloisa will not in all company, even the most popular, see reason to blush. I speak of the subject only.

A few years ago, I remember, the *Memoirs* of Petrarch were in every body's hands, and the general interest they excited was great. Shall I detract from the reputation of the Italian poet if I say that Abeillard was as great a man as he? As great a  
d poet

poet he was not; nor was he employed, as Petrarch was, in the concerns of politics and the intrigues of courts. Fortune was more favourable to the Italian; but her best gifts, the plaudits of admiring cities, and the smiles of popes and potentates, could not make him happy, or settle the eternal restlessness of his mind. Abeillard was equally admired by his contemporaries; his fame even had a wider spread: but the opposition of powerful enemies thwarted all his prospects, and dashed his life with bitterness. They were both lovers: and here as Abeillard was more successful, so was his affection, while it lasted, more within the bounds of common sense and reason. They both celebrated their mistresses. At the time, the compositions of Abeillard were in great vogue, and they were repeated in the politest circles of Europe. Those of Petrarch have come down the stream of time, buoyant, and swelled by the gale of popular applause. Refuse our admiration to the various beauties they contain we cannot; but we may be permitted to think that Petrarch, when he praised his Laura, was too precise and ingenious to be sincere. He wrote three hundred and eighteen sonnets in her praise, and eighty-eight songs.

With

With more confidence Heloisa may enter the lists with Laura. The latter (a little beauty only excepted, and to that the poet's pencil seems to have given no light tinge of colouring), possessed few endowments of art or nature. Virtuous she was and amiable; but we know she could not write, and we do not know that she could read. Heloisa, on the contrary, we may presume, had equal beauty; and she had every qualification, which nature, in her kindest humours, could give, or education could perfect. I will not anticipate: but she was gentle and mild as innocence; learned as the most learned of the age; her soul was Roman; and her heart was a heart of fire.—Had Abeillard and Heloisa been blessed with a de Sade to collect their *Memoirs*, with family kindness, as Petrarch and Laura have, they might have acquired, perhaps, an equal share of public notice and esteem.—In his treatise *de vita Solitaria*, Petrarch speaks of Abeillard, of his abilities, of some events of his life, and of his misfortunes<sup>c</sup>.

But though I may view in a favourable light the two leading characters of my history, I was not less sensible, that, auxiliary force would be necessary to

<sup>c</sup> Lib. 2.

give them consistency and due weight, in the public eye: I have therefore called to my assistance all the great facts and the principal personages, who filled the period of the eighty-four years, which measured the lives of Abeillard and Heloisa. The authors, I consulted on these matters, are not numerous; for I was persuaded that, to write with accuracy, it was better not to heap together many volumes, which, if they did not perplex the judgment, could only serve the ostentatious purpose of crowding the line of references with the display of great names.—In ecclesiastical history, my chief guides were Fleury and Natalis Alexander; in the history of France, Daniel; and in that of England, Mr. Hume. Where I could, I also consulted the original sources themselves.

It is not, I am sure, necessary that I should say, how good a man, and how great an historian, abbé Fleury was. Among his many valuable works, his History of the Church, from its foundation to the council of Constance, stands foremost. It is rather indeed a learned compilation, than a regular and connected narration; but it contains every thing which, the most scrupulous inquirer can wish to look for, and it is told with a simplicity and honest candour,

candour, which, at once portrays the amiable character of the writer, and delights the reader; while he says that, such must be the man, whom Truth would chuse for her historian!—The preliminary *discourses* or dissertations, interspersed in these volumes, are of infinite value. They are written with more elegance and more care than the general body of the history; and they treat of the manner of writing history, of the establishment of christianity, and of the various revolutions, which have attended its progress, of the crusades; of the dissensions betwixt the church and the civil power, and of the origin and decline of religious orders. On these subjects, so important and so delicate, Fleury has said all, that good sense and the most consummate wisdom could suggest, and he has said it with a freedom, which would do honour to the most unprejudiced and philosophic mind. Without fear he brings to view the evils and gross abuses which have disfigured the christian establishment; for he lays it down as a maxim, that all truth should be spoken; and with sagacity he suggests the remedies which should be applied.—With Fleury then I have made very free, and the reader will thank me for it.

Natalis

Natalis Alexander, or Alexander Noel, is another French historian, whom I often quote. He wrote very voluminously on ecclesiastical matters, and his researches are profound and learned. The dissertations, which are numerous, are calculated to throw light on the dark and difficult points of history. His quotations, from ancient authors, are full and accurate, which renders his compilation itself a library.—I have likewise had recourse to Platina and Maimbourg, principally for the history of the popes and the crusades.

These I have mentioned are Roman Catholic historians; and it will be asked, if I have relied implicitly on their representations?—Let it be observed that, I am describing times which preceded the existence of Protestantism four hundred years; the *sources* of my information therefore must necessarily be catholic. As to modern writers, I chose those, in whom, it seemed, I could place most confidence; nor did I once think what mode of religion they had professed. But it will not among the learned, I fancy, as yet be made a question, which church has had the best historians.

Daniel, a dry and uninteresting narrator, I read for the history of France, and Hume, sometimes, for that of England. Thus



Thus I have mentioned my principal authors, and acknowledged my obligations. It remains that I say, into what arrangement I have thrown my materials.—The whole period comprises eighty-four years, which I have divided into such portions, as seemed best adapted to mark the epochs of Abeillard's life; and the concomitant events and characters of Europe I introduced, in their most natural and obvious order. I wished, as far as I was able, to give every thing its proper place. The last period is much longer than the rest; but the reader will see, from the dearth of matter I laboured under, in regard to the life of Heloisa, that it could not otherwise be disposed.

Before I began my work, I wrote, in the most polite manner, to the abbess of the Paraclet, requesting if she had any materials, which hitherto had not seen the light, that she would favour me with them; and at the same time, I offered, with as much gallantry as I thought was due to a venerable abbess, to dedicate the work to her Ladyship. She has taken no notice of my letter. Probably she thought I was a heretic, with whom it might be impious to co-operate (for I omitted to mention the circumstance of my orthodoxy); or, which is most

most likely, she did not wish her name should appear at the head of a work, which, she might think, would be rather a romance, than a serious history. However, I can assure the reader, that the abbey of the Paraclet possesses no records, of the least moment, which have not, long ago, been before the public. Amboise, he has seen, rummaged every shelf of their library.

I have subjoined a translation of the celebrated *letters*, with the originals themselves, as given by Amboise & Gervaise. An edition of them was published in England, some years ago, which I have not seen. In other countries of Europe, as in this, various supposed translations of the letters have been circulated, which the gay and idle may have read with pleasure; but they bear no resemblance to the original. They are the effusions of fancy, and not designed either to delineate the characters of the lovers, or to promote the cause of virtue. It was such a translation, I believe, which Mr. Pope had seen. His poem, with fear and trembling, I have dared gently to criticise. As to my own translation I feel for it no parental fondness: it gives, I hope, the sense of the authors; and to that only I pretend. I do not possess that  
toiling

toiling and patient steadiness, which constitutes a good translator.—Some passages I have curtailed, and omitted others: the Latin, which is entire, will suggest the motive.

My work I now submit to the public with all its imperfections. Where it merits praise, it will find it; and where it should be censured, let censure freely fall. I know not what right the productions of the pen have to plead an exemption from blemishes, to which the fairest forms of nature are sometimes liable: but as candour will view these with indulgence, so will it the former. Wilfully I have not meant to bring a slovenly and unformed work before the public; and its unavoidable defects must be forgiven.

My history breaks off at a most brilliant and important epoch. It is, when Henry Plantagenet had just mounted the throne of England, when his diffentions were soon to begin with Becket, when Frederick Barbarossa was in Germany, when Alexander III. was at Rome, and when the general aspect of Europe seemed to promise events, great and interesting. The period has already been ably treated; but should the public favour encourage me, *perhaps* I may be tempted again to

review it, though a noble lord, narrative from age and unfair from prejudice, may be thought to have exhausted the subject. A Roman Catholic writer, attached to his religion, but unshackled in his thoughts, and free in his expressions, is, in this country, rather a new character in the republic of letters. My abilities, alas! cannot keep pace with my wishes.

*Oscott, near Birmingham,  
December 31, 1786.*

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T H E

THE  
H I S T O R Y  
OF THE LIVES OF  
ABEILLARD and HELOISA.

B O O K I.

*His birth and education—He travels, and comes to Paris—State of learning—He studies under Champeaux and quarrels—Teaches at Melun and Corbeil—Subjects in debate—He falls sick and retires—Returns to Paris—Contends with de Champeaux and triumphs—Goes again into Britany—Resolves to study theology—Gregory VII. Pope.—State of France—State of England—The first crusade.*

Anno, 1079.

PETER ABEILLARD was born in the village of Palais, four leagues from Nantes, in Little Britany, towards the close of the eleventh century, in the year 1079<sup>a</sup>. His father's name was Berenger, a gentleman of noble descent, and Abeillard is thought to have been the eldest of many children. Berenger, before he entered the army, had been early instructed in the elements of such learning as the age had to supply, and he ever after retained a fondness for

BOOK I.

His birth and education.

<sup>a</sup> Hist. Calam.

A

letters:

BOOK I. letters: he was careful therefore that, in the education of his children, whilst their bodies were formed to arms, the more excellent culture of their minds should not be neglected. The church or arms were then the only fashionable professions of gentlemen, and, with the addition of the law, the same continues to be the taste of all polite nations to the present day.

Abeillard came into the world with the happiest dispositions: his mind, gentle as the air of Britany, and fertile as its soil, was open to all the impressions of literary discipline. So he speaks of himself<sup>b</sup>.—Fable relates (for there was a time when the birth of every great man was attended by some marvellous circumstance) that his mother had sure forebodings of his future eloquence, and therefore from the bee, called him Abeillard: she saw honey falling from his lips<sup>c</sup>.—Being his father's favourite, his education was more sedulously guarded; and very soon such fast hold had the love of letters taken of his mind, that they became the ruling passion of his life. Destined to arms, he lost all relish for the pursuits of that brilliant and seductive profession, and he resigned his inheritance, with all the rights of primogeniture, to his younger brothers. "At the feet of Minerva," says he, "I sacrificed all the military pomp which blazes round the car of the God of War<sup>d</sup>."

But what were the charms, which, at that gloomy period of fallen science, could have power to captivate the ardent mind of Abeillard? To judge from his writings, he was not unacquainted with the best authors of the purest age of Roman literature; them, under his father's eye, he had probably

<sup>b</sup> Hist. Calam.

<sup>c</sup> Vie d'Abeil.

<sup>d</sup> Hist. Calam.



probably made his favourite pursuit; and these studies, as they had ornamented his mind, so had they prepared him to enter on a new career, in which alone, at that time, the aspiring ambition of youth could meet an object ample enough to satisfy its desires.

Philosophy, or more properly that branch of it, which is termed logic, or the art of disputation, was then rising into renown; and that our young scholar might have every advantage, which could be given him, of being thoroughly initiated into its various arts, he was put under the tuition of Roscelin, the acuteſt logician of the age<sup>d</sup>.—Roscelin, leſs ſkilled in theology, than in the ſubtilties of his art, brought himſelf, ſome years after, into great trouble, on account of the very ſingular notions he had introduced into the myſterious doctrine of the Trinity. He was a Tritheist. For this he was condemned in the council of Compiègne, 1092<sup>e</sup>.

Under ſo able a maſter, Abeillard, it is not to be doubted, made a rapid advance: the ſtudy was well adapted to his genius: acute and penetrating, he would eagerly devote himſelf to inquiries, which opened to his view an extenſive ſcene, that ſeemed to call all the powers of his ſoul into action, and where he could promiſe to himſelf at once the diſplay of abilities, and the glory of conqueſt.—The victories of the ſchools had then their charms, as ſoothing perhaps to vanity as were thoſe of the field, and ſurely they were more innocent. The laurels, indeed, which wreathed the brows of the literary champion, were not, in the eye of the multitude, ſo awfully dignified, but they drew very general

<sup>d</sup> Præf. Apologet.

<sup>e</sup> Fleury vol. xiii.

BOOK I. admiration, nor were they sullied with a single drop of human blood.

Having thus provided for the future reputation of his son, in a manner which seemed to ensure his success, Berenger withdrew from the noisy scene of arms, to the retirement of a convent.—The cloister was then the usual retreat of men, whom either disappointment had disgusted of the world, or indolence rendered unfit for its active pursuits. It was likewise an asylum, to which religion or the gentle voice of humanity called many, who looked with horror on the enormities of a barbarous and warlike age. Kings were seen to resign their crowns for the monkish cowl, and the walls of the convents thronged with inhabitants of all ages, and of every sex and condition. Abuses and great crimes were the necessary consequence of this promiscuous assemblage of men: but, at the times I am describing, the worst excesses of the cloistered life were but puny evils when compared with the rapines, the murders, the extortions, which, with impunity, were practised on the great theatre of the world.

He travels,  
and comes to  
Paris.

From his cell, Berenger thought to view, in undisturbed repose, the splendid career of his son Abeillard; nor were his expectations frustrated. The young man had hardly reached his sixteenth year, but he felt himself sufficiently strong to rely on his own exertions, and he quitted his masters, whose instructions, as he had little more to learn from them, could only retard the expansion of his mind<sup>f</sup>.—When, by proper discipline, the youthful character has been sometime habituated to the forms of order and of classic rule, it should be left to itself; it will take its own bent, and prosper best.

Britany

<sup>f</sup> Vie d'Abeil.

Britany could no longer satisfy his wishes; he withdrew therefore from his native country, and with an ardour, which shewed the great desire he had of improvement, he rapidly ran over the neighbouring provinces, in quest of science<sup>g</sup>.—In this, he proposed to himself the example of those ancient philosophers, whose lives he had read, and whom he thought it glorious to imitate. Over their minds the love of wisdom held an unbounded controul. “ I emulated, “ says he, the fame of the peripatetic school, and in what- “ ever quarter, I was told, the study of philosophy was “ pursued, thither I went, that no sources of science might “ be hidden from me<sup>h</sup>.”—But when the provincial schools had nothing more to give, Abeillard turned his eyes to Paris; where he arrived about the last year of the eleventh century, and in the twentieth year of his age.

The schools of Paris, for more than a century, had been rising to a great reputation, and they were now become the general mart of science, to which resorted scholars from all the kingdoms of Europe<sup>i</sup>. The circumstance of its being the principal residence of the French monarchs contributed not a little to give it celebrity, and to draw to it the ablest masters.—Since the revival of knowledge in the western empire, under the auspicious eye of Charlemagne, in the eighth century, the greatest monarch perhaps that ever swayed the sceptre, and whom the warrior, the man of letters, and the christian might call his friend, the French nation had taken the lead in the progress of the arts of literature. Yet when compared with the rapid descent, by which the human mind, from the height of science and polished life, is hurried into

State of  
Learning.

ignorance

<sup>g</sup> Hist. Cal.

<sup>h</sup> Ib.

<sup>i</sup> Fleury, Dupin, &c.

BOOK I. ignorance and barbarism, how slow and almost imperceptible is the return it makes even to the first dawns of the new day, which, in the revolutions of states and kingdoms, is sometimes destined to rise upon us!

Alcuin, the luminary of a dark age, whom Britain gave to Charlemagne to be his instructor and his guide, had traced out the lines, by which, he thought, science might be the soonest restored. These rules had been carefully pursued, and though they had led to no splendid improvements, yet the fault lay not so much in the method, as in the tardy constitution of the human mind. He had recommended to begin by orthography (a necessary preliminary, undoubtedly, when even the Emperor himself was unable to write his own name;) to this was to succeed the study of grammar, of rhetoric, and lastly of philosophy, in its three branches, of logic, morals, and nature: but logic, or what I have already more properly called, the art of disputation, was the only portion of that divine science, which was thought worthy to engross the attention of literary ambition<sup>k</sup>.

The rules of grammar, which, in every country, should be primarily applied to its native tongue, were then solely directed to the study of the Latin language; though Latin had ceased to be spoken, and all the infant tongues of Europe were in a state of the lowest barbarism. Nor yet was this privileged tongue itself raised to any degree of classical perfection. So true is it, that the arts and sciences, in their most minute ramifications, keep an exact pace with the ebbs and flows of human nature.—Rhetoric they also studied; but it was a rhetoric which taught them to depart from the noble

<sup>k</sup> Fleury, Dupin, &c.

noble simplicity of truth, and in its stead to substitute an affected jargon of language, and a whimsical display of metaphorical figures. The writings of Alcuin himself attest the justness of these observations.—Nor was their famous logic, which attracted the attention of the admiring world, a jot more valuable. It was no longer, what it had been, under its first masters, in the schools of Greece, the art of accurate reasoning, whereby truth was discovered, and its bounds enlarged, by an easy process, and error was detected; but now it consisted in the mere exercise of disputation, in the subtle arrangement of unmeaning terms, which clouded reason, and enveloped truth. Applause and not instruction was the object of the masters; and he was the greatest adept who, by captious quibbles, could distress his adversary the most<sup>1</sup>.

As the mind was thus bewildered in a maze of sophistry, so was the real science of man and of nature utterly neglected. They knew nothing of the mechanical powers of the world, and every uncommon appearance was considered as a certain presage of extraordinary events: they ascribed them to mystic or to moral causes.—Their ethics ran out into idle speculations, into definitions and divisions of vice and virtue, whilst practical documents and the high duties of life were little regarded.—The important business of criticism, to which modern times are indebted for all they possess, in the line of scientific improvement, was equally unknown as the ways of nature. Fables they received as genuine facts, and the more extraordinary an event was, the greater was its claim to credibility<sup>m</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Fleury, Dupin, &c.

<sup>m</sup> Fleury disc. 5.

But

## BOOK I.

But schools were opened, and monasteries were also founded, wherein instruction was gratuitously distributed, and the crowds of scholars, who attended, were numerous beyond belief. It seemed as if the mind of man, tired out in the horrid scenes of blood-shed, which had so long disgraced the annals of Europe, were returning to juster notions, and that a new order of things were preparing to rise. And so it was; but the great event was as yet distant, in the way to which lay a long and dreary chasm of more than four hundred years.

Paris, I have said, was the great centre of all the knowledge which the eleventh century could boast of, and to this theatre I had conducted my young philosopher. His heart, doubtless, beat with quicker pulsations, when he entered those walls, which were soon to attest his triumphs, and which had long been the object of his ardent wishes.

He studies  
under Cham-  
peaux and  
quarrels.

Among the masters, whose reputation was great in the schools, William de Champeaux was the most eminent. Contemporary writers speak highly of his abilities and of his virtues, and he was deeply versed, they tell us, and well exercised in all the arts of the dialectic discipline<sup>n</sup>. As with painful emulation he had risen to the highest honours in his profession, so was he jealous of the fame he had acquired, and feared the most distant rival. The lessons of this man Abeillard frequented, and he was much pleased with the choice he had made. His fluency of language, and the acuteness of his reasoning, seemed to throw new charms over his favourite art. In animation of spirit, he soon began to skirmish with the foremost of the scholars, and some-  
times

<sup>n</sup> Quercet. Notæ.

times he dared to question even de Champeaux himself°. The veteran was delighted with the prompt character of his disciple, and augured to himself a fresh increase of fame from the exertion of abilities, which, he flattered himself, he should soon be able to draw out in the support of his own opinions.

In these dispositions of mutual benevolence, from which the youthful mind of Abeillard pictured to itself scenes of future happiness, a commerce of friendship began, and he was taken to board into the house of his master. From this circumstance, as he had more frequent opportunities of improvement, so might he soon learn that de Champeaux was not a hero at all times; and the blaze of glory which had seemed to surround him among the plaudits of his scholars, insensibly vanished when viewed with a familiar eye. He began to suspect that this wide-spreading tree was perhaps rather loaded with leaves than fruit.—The stripling now walked with a bolder step into the schools: he dared publicly to contend with Champeaux; he attacked, in serious language, some even of his most favoured opinions; he repeated these attacks daily with more petulance; and sometimes, says he, I seemed to feel a superiority in argument P. —The eye of the philosopher looked benevolence no longer; confused, angry, mortified, he left his seat; and Abeillard was soon obliged to provide himself with another establishment.

Nor was it de Champeaux alone who felt this galling humiliation: many of the first students, at once envious of the growing fame of the young Briton, and stung by the flip-

° Hist. Calam.

P Ibid.

## BOOK I.

pancy of his retorts, under the disguise of supporting their master, thus wantonly attacked, were loud in their indignation. But the general applause of the public went with him; for he was young, handsome, witty, and agreeable<sup>q</sup>.

The schools, as we know from the histories of the age, were not only filled with students, as at present; but men in years, persons of distinction, fathers of families, and ministers of state, after the toils of the day were over, crowded to them as to a theatre of amusement. There was novelty in the scene, and Latin, the language of the disputants, was very generally understood. The tournaments and other martial exercises, which, soon after prevailed in Europe, were to the body, what these controversies had been to the mind. The gauntlet of defiance was here also thrown down, and bold or presumptuous was the man, who dared to take it up.

Abeillard, now confident from success, and elated by the applause of his admirers, weighed his own powers, and thought them equal to any attempt. He was twenty-two years old; an age, when the human mind, in the spring-tide of passion, views the labours of Hercules, as the easy business of a morning's amusement. "I was young indeed," says he, but confident of myself, my ambition had no bounds: I aspired to the dignity of a professor, and only waited till I could fix on a proper place to open my lectures<sup>r</sup>.

Teaches at  
Melun and  
Corbeil.

The court often resided at Melun, then a considerable town on the Seine, ten leagues above Paris. The circumstance was highly favourable to his views, could he obtain permission

<sup>q</sup> Præf. Apologet.

<sup>r</sup> Hist. Calam.



permission to settle there: but it was not easily to be effected. The interest of de Champeaux and his friends, he knew, was great, and all this interest would be exerted to counteract his designs. It is true; nothing was left unattempted against him; secret machinations and open opposition were all in motion; but the good fortune of Abeillard prevailed. De Champeaux had some enemies among the great; the resentful motives which prompted his opposition were evident; Abeillard was young, and youth, in some circumstances, carries an impression with it, too powerful for the schemes and wary circumspection of age and experience. After six months of intrigue and contest, the old professor gave way, and Abeillard entered Melun at the head of a numerous band of followers. The victory was signal<sup>f</sup>.

The schools opened with eclat. The late opposition had but given lustre to his name, and animation to his talents. His lessons were thronged: curiosity was on tiptoe to see the youth, who had discomfited the Goliath of Paris; and the most brilliant success attended his exertions.

Thus having run, some months, in the undisturbed enjoyment of public applause, when a mind less turbulent and ambitious would have reposed in the possession of fame, Abeillard meditated new hostilities against his old master. Tranquility was ill-adapted to his character; he breathed easier in a storm; and the want of a rival was the want of a stimulus, without which admiration itself had little power to please. The recollection of ill-usage, the petulance of youth, and, as he owns himself, an over-weening presump-

<sup>f</sup> Hist. Calam.

BOOK I. tion, aided, as may be imagined, by the flattering instigation of friends, urged him to this extraordinary step. He left Melun, and advanced to Corbeil, within five leagues of Paris<sup>t</sup>.

De Champeaux heard of the approach of the young adventurer with dismay and indignation: it was bringing defiance even to his doors: and what was a circumstance peculiarly irritating, this beardless professor had arranged in systematic order the various opinions of his master, and then he attacked with all the acrimony of wit, and the power of disputation. Nor satisfied with frittering into dust his strongest arguments, on their ruins he erected systems of his own, he formed new plans of opposition, and was throughout supported by the acclamations of his scholars, who were ready to go any lengths with a master, whom they loved and admired.—De Champeaux was not idle: if the enemy conquered, he was determined his victory should be dearly bought. They met repeatedly at each other's school; and the road betwixt Corbeil and Paris was crowded with their respective scholars, who, emulating the ardour of their masters, fought every occasion of signalising their zeal and prowess. Victory hung not long in suspense; Abeillard made an easy conquest, and the enemy retired in confusion. The palm of victory waved proudly in his hand<sup>u</sup>."

Subjects in  
debate.

The reader will wish to know what those important matters were, which could command so much interest, and in which the passions of thousands were engaged. A superficial view over the face of society, at all times, will tell him that, it matters not what the thing itself may be: but once raise the attention of men, and their passions, as by a magic touch,

<sup>t</sup> Hist. Calam.

<sup>u</sup> Vie d'Abeil.

touch, will rush forward into faction, whether it be to ascertain the just dimensions of a gewgaw, or to give away an empire.

The grand point then in debate, and which continued for centuries in high litigation, was, whether that which is *universal* in the mind has also a *real* existence in nature; that is, whether Peter and John, individuals of the human race, possess so completely the totality of rational nature, as to be only *accidentally* different men.—Champeaux maintained the affirmative, Abeillard the negative, question.—If the whole *essence* of humanity, objected the latter, be *substantially* in each individual, then are John and Peter the same man; or, if all be in Peter, what is left for John? There is but one human substance, he urged, in nature, and of this all the individuals of the universe must be accounted modes.—He might likewise have insisted on the arguments, which have since been enforced against the doctrine of Spinoza; for the two opinions are very nearly allied.—If the same human nature be not *indivisibly* in Peter and John, replied Champeaux, they are not both men, for it is only the attribute of humanity which makes them what they are<sup>v</sup>.—He was not aware that these abstracted ideas had no existence out of his own mind; that they expressed nothing which could be found in nature.—Had their notions been derived from this source, the object of their researches would have been something real, and mankind would not so long have wandered in the regions of error or of romantic extravagance.

<sup>v</sup> Vie d'Abeil. p. 25. Bayle, vol. i.

## BOOK I.

On the two notions, just mentioned, were founded the respective systems of the *nominalists* and *realists*, sects of such high renown in the christian schools, that their disputes, for ages, seemed to have absorbed the strongest exertions of human wit.—Many, and very similar, were the other questions in agitation. Could their enumeration possibly give pleasure, it should not be withheld. Enough perhaps has been instanced to damp the most ardent curiosity: if not, I must refer my reader to the schoolmen, whose volumes have come down to us, full and unadulterated as they fell from their pens.

He falls sick  
and retires.

Abeillard now deemed himself the chosen minion of fortune, and nothing, it seemed, could retard his ascent to higher honours. But incessant application had preyed on his health; his fibres were yet too weak to support so long a tension; and delicacy of frame soon effected what the efforts of de Champeaux had aimed at in vain. By the advice of his physicians, when all other means had proved ineffectual, he left Corbeil, and retired to his native country<sup>w</sup>.—It was well judged that cessation from labour, and the air of Britany, which had given the first tone to his constitution, would probably best ensure his recovery.—Here he remained two long years, at a distance, he observes, from all that was dearest to him, and only consoled by the repeated assurances of his friends, that his return was anxiously wished for by all, whose souls were enamoured of the love of wisdom.

During this period of retirement, every thing was calm in the schools of Paris. De Champeaux, freed from the pressure of his rival, had leisure to breathe in peace; and he

<sup>w</sup> Hist. Calam.

he looked forward towards church-preferment, as to the adequate reward of his services. For some time, he had been archdeacon of Paris, a post of dignity and trust.

At the times I am describing, the general face of religion was much disfigured by private vices and public crimes: nor did the conduct of its ministers merit less reprehension: on the contrary, the secular clergy, in particular, was ignorant and undisciplined, effeminate and licentious. To remedy the evil, as far as might be, recourse was often had to the cloisters: Here could be found men, endowed at least with more piety and learning, and these were promoted to the first ecclesiastical dignities. Hence the ambitious sometimes became monks; the humility of the profession, they knew, might lead to honours; and though the mitre should never press their brows, still, in the monastic life itself, there were posts of splendour and emolument, wherein vanity might be satisfied, and even ambition could find a pillow on which to repose.—With these views, it is said, de Champeaux entered the cloister. He chose for his retreat a small monastery, then out of the walls of Paris, and which, in process of time, became the celebrated convent of St. Victor. In the eye of the philosopher, to whom the definitions of universal nature were familiar, but little, it seems, was necessary to constitute a monk; for in his new habit he retained his old ways; the same lectures continued; he was contentious as before; and the little convent of St. Victor became a school of controversy and philosophic warfare\*.

To his logical disputations he, in a short time, subjoined lessons on rhetoric, and these were followed by more important

\* Hist. Cālam.

## BOOK I.

portant theological discussions. De Champeaux is said to have been the first master who had ventured to give public lectures in divinity, in the form of polemic disputations; but when Abeillard was away, and his abilities, which, it must be owned, were very great, had their full play, the whole range of science seemed placed within the easy grasp of his comprehension.

He returns to  
Paris.

Such were the events which had taken place at Paris, when Abeillard, in the vigour of revived health, returned from Britany. He was now twenty-eight years old. His mind also, genially refreshed by repose and inward rumination on itself, had acquired a new spring: he had extended, doubtless, his former train of ideas, had arranged them in fresh combinations, and had added considerably to the old stock.—It is with the mind of man, as with the earth we tread on; her fruitful lap must sometimes repose from the harrow, or instead of teeming with plenty, she will give us weeds, or her best produce will be feeble and uninvigorating.—He came straight to Paris.

De Champeaux was in the quiet possession of the lectures, just mentioned, when Abeillard re-appeared. It was a moment of some anxiety to both; but the young man evidently shewed an indecision, which could not at once be unravelled. He weighed his situation; when, to the surprise of every one, he again put himself under the tuition of his old master, and frequented his rhetorical lesson. There was a mystery in this conduct: either he felt himself deficient in the art, or he hoped to regain the favour of a person, whose enmity, he had reason to suspect, might prove an obstacle to his future progress,

progress, or it was his wish perhaps to have it more easily in his power to humble the man he hated. He himself barely relates the fact.

De Champeaux, if he was ignorant of the human heart, or if vanity had obscured his judgment, might be flattered by this apparent submission. The daring youth, who had braved him in the schools and triumphed, now voluntarily courts his instruction, and seems disposed to take wisdom from his lips!—But the illusive dream soon vanished. It could not be, that rivals, whose prejudices were inveterate, whose opinions so widely varied, and whose pursuits were the same, could meet again, and really be friends. Abeillard once more assailed his enemy in the open field of controversy, (for though rhetoric was his leading object, he frequented the other lessons,) and so irresistible was the attack, particularly on the great point of *universal essences*, which I have described, that de Champeaux, opinionative and supported as he was, owned himself convinced, and publicly subscribed to the opinion of his adversary.—It might be the effect of conviction, of pusillanimity, or of a mind rendered lowly by the influence of the cowl. The public, at least, judged unfavourably of the step; his credit left him, his scholars withdrew, and it was even in agitation to forbid him the schools of philosophy<sup>2</sup>.

Abeillard knew how to conquer, and how to avail himself of victory: he received, with great marks of benevolence, the scholars of de Champeaux, and again opened his school with more splendor, and with more general approbation than ever. Very soon he was the sole professor in

Contends  
with de  
Champeaux,  
& triumphs.

<sup>2</sup> Hist. Calam.

BOOK I. Paris; for he who had succeeded to de Champeaux, when he became a monk and retired to St. Victor, of his own accord waited on Abeillard, surrendered to him his chair of philosophy, and requested to be enrolled in the number of his disciples<sup>a</sup>.—This may be regarded as the most brilliant epoch in the life of Abeillard. He rose every morning to the smiles of an approving public; and the church, at the same time, willing to testify the high opinion she entertained of his merit, presented him with a canonicate in the cathedral of Paris<sup>b</sup>.—It was a sinecure, and the emoluments were bestowed on him without any further obligation; for I do not find he was at all engaged in the ecclesiastical state.

De Champeaux viewed with pain the bright sunshine, which seemed hourly to expand round his adversary: he was determined to obstruct its spread; but as he was cautious to attack a reputation which, he knew, he could not fully, he hit on an expedient which succeeded.—Though the person, I have mentioned, had resigned the honours of his chair to Abeillard, he had still retained the salary, and was therefore in fact the regular professor. This man he accused of crimes and misdemeanors, and so far made good his charges, that he was removed from his office, and another was chosen in his place, who, it may well be imagined, bore little kindness towards Abeillard, or wished to patronize his renown<sup>c</sup>.

Abeillard was unprepared for this wily stratagem, and once more he found himself necessitated to retire to Melun. To be outwitted by an enemy he despised was a mortifying circumstance; in other regards, the event only served to enhance his fame. The most prejudiced began to suspect what

<sup>a</sup> Hist. Calam.

<sup>b</sup> Vie d'Abeil. p. 28.

<sup>c</sup> Hist. Calam.



what the motives were which had instigated the conduct of de Champeaux, even from the first commencement of hostilities; the number of his friends increased; his lectures were received with a more marked applause, if possible; and in triumph of soul he applied to himself the line of Ovid,

*Summa petit livor, perflant altissima venti.*

*De Rem. Am. l. 1.*

Even the best friends of de Champeaux were severe in their reflections. Monk as he now is, said they, he should retire from the world; the noise of the schools and the dissipating scenes of Paris, accord ill with his new profession; woods and solitude would give an edge to his devotion, and dispose him for a nearer intercourse with heaven<sup>d</sup>.—Stung by these reproaches, he saw it was time to give way, and having prevailed on the monks to accompany him, they all removed from St. Victor to a country retirement more remote from the city.

Abeillard, hearing of the enemy's flight, apprehended he might return without further molestation, and again he turned his face towards the capital. But as the schools, within the walls, were possessed by the new professor, he advanced only as far as the mount of St. Genevieve, there halted, and encompassed by his followers, with all expedition, made the necessary preparations for a vigorous assault on the enemy.—The mount of St. Genevieve has long been rendered famous by a large abbey, which covers its summit; nor is it less famous on account of the superstitious veneration which, even at this day, the inhabitants of the most dissipated, the most enlightened, and perhaps most

<sup>d</sup> Hist. Calam.

## BOOK I.

unbelieving city in the universe, practise round the shrine of the holy shepherdes, who has given her name to the mountain.—When I speak of superstitious veneration, it is clear I mean such abuses, as every traveller has witnessed, and every good man has lamented.

In the retirement of his country cell, de Champeaux being informed of the step his rival had taken, instantly took the alarm, and with his whole community returned in haste to St. Victor, resolved, says Abeillard, either to raise the siege, or to support, at all perils, the fortune of his friend. His presence, however, produced not the intended effect. For no sooner was the voice of de Champeaux again heard in the schools, than the new professor, whose talents, it appears, were very slender, found himself deserted by his scholars, and the two rival philosophers remained the sole champions on the field<sup>c</sup>.

I leave it to the reader, whose mind perhaps may have been warmed by the novelty of an uncommon story, to picture to himself those scenes of acrimony, and pertinacious disputation, which rapidly succeeded to one another among the scholars of these able masters and the two heroes themselves. Abeillard is rather modest in his narration: but, says he, I think, I may boldly take to myself the words of Ajax,

Si quæritis hujus

Fortunam pugnae, non sum superatus ab illo.

Ovid Met. l. xiii.

Hegoes again  
into Britany.

In the midst of this high tide of desperate controversy, he received a letter from his mother, requesting he would, without

<sup>c</sup> Hist. Calam.

without delay, come into Britany, on some family business, which concerned her much. He obeyed the summons with an alacrity that did him credit. It was leaving the post of honour at a crisis, when the general aspect of the day seemed to promise a certainty of success; but the call of nature came nearer to his heart than all the honours, however great his ambition might be, which fortune seemed prepared to shower upon him. When the heart of a wise man ceases to vibrate to the gentle impressions of humanity, he becomes a monster, and should retire to the woods.—The mother of Abeillard, after the retreat of her husband from the world, now meditated the same step; it was the fashion of the times: and the previous settlement of some worldly matters seems to have been the business which called Abeillard from the schools. Whatever it was, his stay in Britany was short: he returned, but he found, to his surprise, that de Champeaux, during the interval of his absence, had been decorated with the mitre of Chalons<sup>f</sup>.

Here I shall leave this extraordinary man. He has exhibited a scene not incurious in itself; not from the display of an uncommon character, for his passions were the common passions of man; nor because, saint-like as he is said to have been, he pursued the darling object of his ambition with unceasing ardour, for this is no unusual thing, at all times; but merely because the business, in which he was engaged, differs from the pursuits of modern habits, and is therefore novel to us. Every man, whose heart is not at ease, looks round for what he wants, and if his character be peculiar, he will seize on a peculiar object. But, in many regards,  
it

<sup>f</sup> Hist. Calam. Fleury, &c.

BOOK I. it would surely have been well for the common interests of humanity, had all the ardent spirit of the eleventh century been as innocently employed, as was that of de Champeaux. Europe was in a state of fermentation.

He resolves to  
study divinity.

Abeillard, returned to the schools, saw nothing any longer worth contending for: He stood without a rival; but then he stood without feeling that thrill of pleasure, which success gives to animated exertions: besides, this rival, who had given way before him and owned his inferiority, had first reached, notwithstanding, the goal of his wishes: to the honours he had obtained, he thought perhaps that he himself had equal, if not better pretensions.—Disappointment would be the consequence of these reflections; and when this happens, a disgust of former pursuits often follows, whilst the heart sinks from its expansion, and hardly seems to fill the breast.—Moreover, philosophy had no longer any novelty in his eyes: he had seen her, and that familiarly, in all the forms, whether of art or nature, which she could then exhibit. Reflection might also have told him, that there were other studies more deserving of attention, wherein an object could be found more adequate to his talents; and in these thoughts the advice of a parent might have confirmed him, whom he greatly honoured, and who then was turning her back on the empty employments of a vain world.—Abeillard assented to these suggestions of reason, and at once resolved to apply himself to the study of theology.

The reader has gone with me over more than the twenty last years of the eleventh century, and I have confined his view  
barely

barely to those transactions, in which Abeillard, the hero of these pages, bore a principal part. The introduction of large objects into the small scene, I was delineating, would have had a preposterous effect; it would have destroyed that harmony or unity of design, which pleases best. But, during this short period, very great events had agitated the christian world: them I will now bring forward; they will give an agreeable relief to the eye; and we will review them, on a large scale, with the unprejudiced coolness of historical candour.

✓ Hildebrand, the famous Gregory the seventh, then wore the triple crown. He had been educated at Cluni, a French monastery of high renown, in the severity of monastic discipline; had then risen to the first dignities in the church; and during the pontificates of five successive Popes, had been honoured with their confidence in the discharge of the most arduous business.—It is well known what a torrent of vice had then spread itself over the face of christendom: to stem this, in vain had every effort been made, which honest virtue and christian zeal could suggest. Hildebrand, with the keen sensibility of a virtuous mind, had long viewed the fallen state of religion, and he ascended the Papal throne, with the unanimous approbation of all orders of the Roman church, big with vast designs of reformation. “ We chuse  
“ Hildebrand for the true vicar of Christ, (they are the  
“ words used at his election,) a man of much learning,  
“ of great piety, of prudence, justice, fortitude, and reli-  
“ gion. He is modest, abstemious, and chaste; regular in  
“ the discipline of his family, hospitable to the poor, and  
“ from his tender years nursed in the bosom of our holy  
“ church:

Gregory VII.  
Pope.

BOOK I. "church: to him we give those powers of supremacy, which  
 "Peter once received from the mouth of God<sup>h</sup>."

The source of the evils, he lamented, lay, it was evident, in the general corruption of manners, in the unbounded sway of passion, and in the abuse of power. With an intrepidity of soul, that perhaps was never equalled, he dared singly to oppose this multitudinous enemy, and he called the sovereigns of Europe to his tribunal. The motives which led him on, and the habits of stern virtue, which had steelled his character, excluded almost the possibility of suspicion, that he himself perhaps was arrogating a power, which belonged not to him, and from the abuse of which even greater evils might ensue, than those he aimed to suppress. Minds of the widest comprehension may be sometimes so engrossed by a single object, as to be insensible to the most obvious deductions, which reason in vain holds up before them. But the mis-conceptions of Gregory were those of a great man, and his errors were, in part, the errors of the age.

To effectuate more completely the schemes he had in view, he conceived the bold design of making himself sole monarch of the earth. The concerns of Europe, whether ecclesiastical or civil, would then be brought within his own cognizance; he should distribute favours, as merit might seem to call for them; and he would dispose of crowns, which, too often, he observed, fell upon the heads of the unworthy, or of men who knew not the proper use of power.

Enthroned in the chair of the humble fisherman, Gregory put his hand to the work. The simoniacal disposal of church livings was a crying sin, which called aloud for redress, and  
 he

<sup>h</sup> Platina and others.

he hesitated not to aim the first blow at the very root of the disorder, though it lay in the rapacious breast of power, and in the courts of Princes.—The incontinence of the clergy was another foul stain on religion; for the sons of God seeing the daughters of men that they were fair, took to them helpmates from among all that they chose. The stern pontiff had no indulgence for this weakness of his brethren.

During the twelve years of his reign he held eleven councils at Rome, the object of all which was, the suppression of the crimes, I have mentioned, or to enforce the execution of decrees or discipline, or to confirm, by a more solemn sanction, the sentences of excommunication and deposition which, in the plenitude of his supposed power, he had pronounced against the obstinate and refractory.

In two synods he compelled Berengarius, who had innovated in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, to abjure his opinions, and to subscribe to the ancient faith.—The general opposition, which the dogmatical sentiments of this man excited, proves at least their novelty in the eleventh century.

Studious of reconciling the long divided churches of the East and West, he had purposed to proceed himself to Constantinople, and to bring the grand controversy to issue. The disturbances of Europe forbid it.—He wrote to the Grecian Emperor, who had implored his succour that, at the head of the powers of the West, he would march to his assistance; and he conjured the German Henry and William Duke of Burgundy to join him in the enterprise<sup>i</sup>.—The idea did

<sup>i</sup> Nat. Alex. sæc. xi.

BOOK I. honour to the magnanimous spirit of Gregory; but twenty more years were to elapse before Europe would be prepared to send her holy warriors against the Infidel powers of the Eastern world.

He reprimanded Salomon King of Hungary, that he had dared to accept the investiture of his realm from the hand of the Emperor, and not from Rome. Hungary, said he, was rendered feudatory of the holy see by Stephen, the best of her kings, and your right of holding the sceptre is from hence<sup>k</sup>.

He wrote to the kings of Denmark, of Sweden, and of Norway, reproving what had been ill done, and urging them to the due discharge of their duties in the support of religion, and in procuring the welfare of their people; but particularly he presses on their attention a filial obedience to the apostolic see<sup>l</sup>.

The murder of Stanislaus, bishop of Cracow, he revenged on the Polish king and the other perpetrators of the crime, in the most signal manner. In execration of the deed, the whole kingdom was laid under an interdict, the king deprived of all regal power, and his subjects absolved from their allegiance. None of the sons of those, who either aided or advised the crime, said he, shall be promoted to holy orders to the end of the fourth generation<sup>m</sup>.

The kingdom of Spain, he pretended, had, from time immemorial, belonged to the Roman church; and when the count de Ronci applied to him for permission to retain the lands he might conquer from the Saracens, who then possessed them; he granted his prayer, on condition, he should hold them

<sup>k</sup> Fleury, vol. xiii.

<sup>l</sup> Nat. Alex. sæc. xi.

<sup>m</sup> Ibid.



them in the name of St. Peter. But I would rather, he observed, they should remain in the hands of the infidels, than that christians should possess them, who might refuse to do homage to the holy see<sup>n</sup>.

Alfonfus, king of Castile, who had married the near relation of his first wife, he threatened with excommunication, if he dared to cohabit any longer with her; and he admonished him to remove the evil counsellors, who had advised him perversely. “ Weighing, with awful resolution, says he, the value of earthly possessions, it is then, I think, that a bishop best merits his name, when, in the cause of justice, he suffers persecution. In obedience to the laws of heaven, I will rather be hated by the wicked, than flatter their desires, and incur the anger of an irritated God<sup>o</sup>.”

To Dalmatia, to the states of Venice, and to Sardinia, he wrote in the same style of a judge and their supreme governor.—Even to the inhospitable climes of Russia he extended his monarchical jurisdiction. “ Your son, says he to king Demetrius, has been with me, requesting that I would make over your kingdom to him, in the name of St. Peter. His petition appeared just, and I granted it<sup>p</sup>.”

The sons of count Raymond had quarrelled: Gregory, as the umpire between contending princes, undertook to reconcile them. “ Tell them, says he, that, if they disobey my orders, and continue enemies, I will deprive them of the protection of St. Peter: them and their abettors I will retrench from the society of christians: from

<sup>n</sup> Fleury, vol. xiii.

<sup>o</sup> Nat. Alex. sæc. xi.

<sup>p</sup> Fleury, *ibid*.

BOOK I. “ that moment, their arms shall be successful in war, nor  
 “ shall they ever prosper<sup>1</sup>.”

William, our Norman conqueror, he treated with unusual lenity; he speaks of his virtues, of his moderation, and his justice; and because he had shewn more respect, than other princes, towards the holy see, his regal power, he thinks, should be more mildly handled. But when he sent his legate into England to demand an oath of fealty to himself and successors, and to urge the more regular payment of the subsidy due to Rome, the monarch answered, that the money should be remitted; “ but as to the oath, said  
 “ he, I neither have nor will make it, because I have never  
 “ promised it, nor do I find that it was ever made by my  
 “ predecessors to yours.”—The pontiff was irritated; “ it  
 “ is his submission, and not his money, that I value, said  
 “ he;” but he acquiesced: he seemed to be awed by William, and probably admired in him that boldness of spirit, which, from the dukedom of Normandy, had raised him to the throne of England<sup>2</sup>.

The same was not his moderation towards Philip, king of France. Hearing that he had refused to admit to their sees some bishops, who had been canonically chosen, he addressed a letter to the French prelates, expressive of his strongest indignation: “ either your king, said he, shall  
 “ cease from his simoniacal conduct, or the realm of  
 “ France, struck by a general anathema, shall withdraw  
 “ from his obedience, unless they rather chuse to renounce  
 “ their christianity.” Philip gave way.—Afterwards, in a letter to the monarch himself, he says: “ reflect, Sir, how  
 “ great

<sup>1</sup> Fleury, vol. xiii.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

“ great was the glory of your ancestors, as long as they continued faithful to the church, and protected its rights: but no sooner, in a change of manners, have the divine and human laws been trampled on, than your power and celebrity are no more. The important duties of my charge will often compel me to repeat these truths to you, and sometimes perhaps in severer language.”—Philip had seized by violence the property of some Italian merchants: Gregory commanded him to restore it; should he neglect to do it, he wrote to the count of Poitiers, that it was his intention to remove him from his throne. “ Should he persevere in his iniquities, we will sever him and all those who shall obey him as their king, from the communion of the faithful; and every day shall this anathema be renewed on the altar of St. Peter. We have borne his crimes too long; but now were his power equal to that which the emperors of Rome practised on the martyrs, no human fear should withhold our vengeance any longer.”

But it was with Henry the Fourth, emperor of Germany, that was the grand quarrel, and here we shall see marked, in the strongest colours, the magnanimous and proud spirit of Gregory. What first raised the indignation of the zealous pontiff, was the simoniacal distribution of benefices, publicly practised by Henry; and he was accused of various other crimes. The pope exerted all his powers to stem the raging torrent; he advised, he expostulated, he reprimanded, and he threatened. It was in vain; conspiracies were formed against him, his person was seized, but he was rescued

<sup>1</sup> Fleury, vol. xiii.

## BOOK I.

rescued by the timely interference of the Roman populace. Under pain of anathema, he then ordered Henry to appear before him at Rome, and he fixed the day for his appearance. The emperor disobeyed the summons, convoked an assembly at Wormes; Gregory is accused of crimes, as unfounded, as they are scandalous, and the sentence of deposition is pronounced against him. On the other hand, the pope calls a synod at Rome, where the prince is solemnly excommunicated and deposed, and his subjects are forbidden to obey him. The sentence was in these words.—“ Peter, “ prince of the apostles, listen to thy servant, whom thou “ hast tutored from his youth, and whom, to the present “ hour, thou hast freed from the hands of the wicked, who “ hate me, because I am faithful to thee. Thou canst wit- “ nefs, and with thee can witness the holy mother of Christ, “ and thy brother Paul, that unwillingly I was compelled “ to mount this holy throne. Rather would I have worn “ out my life in exile, than have usurped thy seat to gain “ glory and the praise of mortals. By thy favour has the “ care of the christian world been committed to me; from “ thee I have the power of binding and of loosening. Rest- “ ing on this assurance, for the honour and support of the “ church, in the name of God the Father almighty, of his “ Son, and of the Holy Ghost, I depose Henry, who rashly “ and insolently has raised his arm against thy church, from “ all imperial and regal power, and his subjects I absolve “ from all allegiance to him. For it is meet that he, who “ aims to retrench the majesty of thy church, should be “ despoiled of his own honours<sup>t</sup>.”

<sup>t</sup> Plat. Fleury, &c.

It was the first time that such a sentence had been pronounced against a sovereign prince.—Moderate men were shocked at the procedure, and talked of terms of accommodation. “ I am no enemy to concord, replied Gregory, “ let Henry first make his peace with heaven: nor did I “ proceed to this rigour, till all other means had been “ tried in vain.”—Some observed that a prince should not be excommunicated.—“ And when Christ committed his “ church to Peter, answered the pontiff sternly, saying, “ feed my sheep, did he except kings?”

The nobles of Germany, whom the crimes and misconduct of Henry had exasperated, resolve not to lose so favourable an occasion of resenting their injuries, and publicly announce their intention of electing another master. To ward off the blow, Henry crossed the Alpes, hoping by this apparent submission, to appease also the anger of Gregory. Arrived at Canusium, a castle belonging to the countess Matilda, where the pope then was, he dismissed his guard, laid down every ensign of royalty, and barefooted, in the humble garb of a penitent, he presented himself at the gates. He was refused admittance. It was winter, and the season was severe. Here he remained, silent and submissive, till the rising of the fourth sun, when, at the entreaty of Matilda and others, he was admitted to the presence of Gregory. An accommodation took place, and his absolution was pronounced, on condition, that he should ever remain obedient to the holy see, that he should appear before his accusers to answer to their charges, and that he should abide by the final award of Rome. Henry assented.<sup>u</sup>

<sup>u</sup> Fleury *ibid.*

## BOOK I.

In the presence of the people, Gregory then celebrated the sacred mysteries; and after the consecration, whilst the emperor and his assistants stood round the altar; “ I have  
 “ been accused, said he, (turning towards them with the  
 “ holy bread in his hand,) by you and your party, of various crimes, as well before as since my promotion to the  
 “ chair of St. Peter. They that know me can sufficiently  
 “ attest my innocence; but that the world may know it;  
 “ let this body of our Lord, which you see, be a witness  
 “ to me: if I am guilty, may I die!” Uttering these words, he put a part of the sacred bread into his mouth, and swallowed it.—The solemn and unexpected action struck the assembly, and their acclamations sounded through the castle. The pontiff then addressed the astonished prince.  
 “ My son, the remaining portion is for you. The German nobles have accused you, and they demand that  
 “ you be judged; but how uncertain are the judgments of  
 “ men! If you feel yourself innocent, at once save your  
 “ own honour, silence your enemies, and make me your  
 “ friend. God shall be your judge.” So saying, he advanced towards him: the emperor shrunk back, and withdrawing, for a moment, with his friends, it was determined that he should not expose himself to the tremendous ordeal<sup>v</sup>.

The Lombards, looking with indignation on this base submission of their king, resolve to give their allegiance to his son, who was yet an infant. Henry takes the alarm, and breaks through the treaty he had just contracted.—But the German states assemble at Forcheim, and being informed by the pope’s legates, that the sentence of deposition against  
 Henry

<sup>v</sup> Fleury *ibid*.

Henry had not been revoked, though he had been taken into communion, they elect for their king Rodolphus duke of Suabia.—Gregory, to whom sufficient attention had not been paid in this important step, for some time seemed to remain neuter between the contending factions. He received their ambassadors, who came to petition that the artillery of the vatican might play on their respective enemies. The pontiff only answered, that they should first lay down their arms, and he would judge their causes. But inaction ill-accommoded with his restless disposition: he convoked another synod, wherein Henry was again excommunicated and deposed, and his dominions solemnly transferred to Rodolphus. To the new king he promised victory; and seemed to predict death and successful arms to the deposed monarch. Heaven was inattentive to his voice; for after repeated battles, Rodolphus himself fell. Henry then marched to Rome, accompanied by Guibertus, archbishop of Ravenna, whom he had chosen anti-pope, and laid siege to the castle of St. Angelo. The tiara trembled on the head of Gregory; and he was on the point of falling into the hands of his enemy, when the renowned Robert Guiscard, who was become the fast friend of the pontiff, marched from the East to his deliverance. The siege was raised, and Henry, whom his anti-pope had just crowned emperor, retired. But the Romans, worn down by troubles and the devastations of war, began to treat Gregory as the author of their misfortunes. His high spirit could ill-brook this reverse of fortune: he withdrew to Salerno, where he died the year following, in 1085<sup>w</sup>.

<sup>w</sup> Platina, Fleury, &c.

Nor was he more indulgent to the vices of churchmen, than to the excesses of princes. Bishops and archbishops, whose sins were flagrant, he excommunicated and deposed in all quarters of the globe, and his censures fell, like the hail in March, wherever vice dared to rear its head. But to the virtuous he was indulgent, and he rewarded their merit.

Notwithstanding this extraordinary severity of character and conduct, Gregory found friends in the softer sex. Agnes, mother to Henry, and Matilda his relation, countess of Tuscany, admired him as the greatest and best of men: nor was theirs a sterile admiration. The countess made over to the holy see all her possessions, which were considerable, in Lombardy and Tuscany; her purse and interest were ever devoted to Gregory; and her armies were ready to march at his call. As might be expected, his enemies, who were numerous, and particularly the churchmen, whose incontinence he chastised with a severe hand, were loud in their reflections; but so irreproachable and so exemplary was the tenour of his life, that malevolence itself could not tarnish its lustre\*.

Such was Gregory the Seventh. It has been his lot, as it has been that of all great men, to be admired by some, and to be censured by others. These reflect not that he lived in the eleventh century, when the manners of the age, and the ideas of men, were so different from those of the present day. We generally measure the conduct of others at a very unfair standard.—The notions of Gregory were some of them, I confess, even then novel; but they were principally grounded

\* Platina, Fleury, &c.



grounded on a newly-discovered collection of decrees, to which the weak criticism of the times gave great authenticity. The high powers he exercised were not disputed in their principle; he was even urged to the use of them, as contending factions judged they might be serviceable to their views.

If we contemplate Gregory with the same eyes, with which we look on an Alexander or on a Cæsar, I think, we may be disposed to raise him far above the level of those mighty conquerors. With them he aimed at universal empire, but with views far more meritorious than theirs. His great ambition was to extirpate vice from the earth, and over its surface to extend the benign influence of that religion, which himself practised and revered. Before a mind, swelling with this noble project, was it not natural, that princes and sceptred kings should sink into insignificance? He would treat them as impediments, which lay in the way of his designs. Gregory, at the head of armies, would have called after him the admiration of posterity: we view him in another light, because habituated to appreciate what are called great qualities, by the conquest of kingdoms and the overthrow of armies, we have not eyes for other talents, or for achievements formed in another order of things.

But though this power of Gregory, which his successors, as circumstances favoured, long strove to support, could sometimes check the progress of vice, yet could it not, by any means, complete the object they had in view. The evil was too inveterate.—Europe was divided into an infinity of petty states, the heads over which lived in perpetual hostilities. Thus was formed a scale of oppression: the strongest

BOOK I. became the tyrant; but the weakest also had vassals, on whom the hand of despotism pressed with all the weight it had.—General dissipation, and the consequence of it general indolence, gave birth to the basest species of crimes; and had not the call of arms roused them into action, the state of humanity would have been greatly more deplorable than it was. The disorders of a relaxed habit are often the most fatal.

State of  
France.

When we listen to the descriptions, exaggerated it may be presumed, which some historians give of the kingdom of France, the mind draws back with horror. Yet in the midst of this scene, the light and airy Philip indulged himself in all the joys of wine and women. Tired of his queen, he forcibly took to his arms Bertrada, the wife of the count of Anjou, and he called upon the laws to give their sanction to the iniquitous deed. The thunders of the vatican rolled over his head, and fell; but he had address enough to ward off the worst effect of excommunication, which was deposition, and the consequent defection of his subjects.—The rapacity of the great barons was insatiable; and the bishops, those meek-eyed ministers of peace, bound on the helmet, and with the arm of flesh defended the rights of the church and their own possessions.

State of  
England.

In England the general aspect of affairs was more pleasing, than in other parts of Europe. The conquest, though humbling to the British spirit, was productive of happy effects. It served to rouse the fallen character of the nation: there was something in the Norman blood well adapted to coalesce with the English constitution, and to improve it;

a new

a new tide of life began to flow in our veins. Till then, almost unknown and little important in the connection of Europe, England, like a new constellation, appeared above the horizon, and soon rose to the first magnitude by its learning, by its power, by its commerce, by its conquests.—William, indeed, was a tyrant; but what conqueror was ever otherwise? The severity of his reign was the natural effect of circumstances: he had to break the proud spirit of his new subjects, which, left to itself, must ever have fermented into plots and insurrections; he had to shew them that it was not the capricious will of fortune which had put the sceptre into his hand, but that he owed it to the sure ascendancy of his own abilities and arm, and therefore that he was able to maintain it; and he had to reward those brave companions, who had bled and conquered by his side. In his friends he saw merit, which he could not descry in his enemies, and what wonder, if the possessions of the latter were seized to enrich them; but even here he wished to support the outward forms of justice<sup>2</sup>.

His son and successor, William Rufus, was a tyrant by principle, and never perhaps did a more stern and undisciplined heart beat in the human breast.

Lanfranc and Anselm, at this period, successively filled the see of Canterbury; men of superior talents, of superior piety, and of superior fortitude. By them religion was supported, whilst its mild influence began to soften the ferocious manners of the age; and learning, under their protection, again dared to rear its head. England looked up to these venerable prelates, and in the milder light which beamed

<sup>2</sup> Hume and others.

## BOOK I.

beamed from their virtues, seemed to discover something that might be admired, and something that might be imitated. All was not absorbed in the blaze of martial splendor.

Unfortunately, the notions of prerogative and exclusive privileges, which, originating from the chair of St. Peter, soon took possession of the breasts of churchmen, precipitated these worthy men into disputes with their sovereigns, from which fatal evils ensued. Thus was obstructed the spread of those many advantages which, in other circumstances, England would have derived from their talents and their virtues. When I read the invectives of modern historians against such men; I own, I blush: for their lives were without reproach, and the motives of their conduct, grounded on the approved maxims of the age, were dictated to them by honour and sincerity. Had they lived at some earlier or some later period, differently would they have acted; but in the eleventh century, not to have conformed to its principles, would have been a base surrender of rights and privileges, which every idea of their minds then told them to revere<sup>a</sup>.

Though the historian, whose business it should be to detail the events of this period, and to portray the different characters, whom he should find deserving of great praise or of great reprehension, might find ample matter for his pen, and in that matter, ample amusement for his readers; yet is there one grand event which seems to occupy so large a space in the eye of the beholder, that all other objects dwindle away before it.—I have said what may be deemed sufficient to exhibit the general features of the times; that  
solely

<sup>a</sup> Fleury, Nat. Alex. sæc xi. quoting original authors.

solely is my object; the remaining delineation will develop what else may be thought requisite to complete the portrait.

After Constantine, in the fourth century, had given celebrity to the christian religion, and by his care, and that of his mother Helen, Palestine in particular, the native land of our Saviour, had been decorated with many monuments of their piety, and the holy places at Jerufalem had been brought out to more public inspection; a certain instinctive veneration for that distant and venerable spot seized on the minds of men. The soil, on which Jesus Christ had stood, they deemed blessed; and what seems more extraordinary, says a writer who does not always reason justly, even the instruments which had been used in the shedding of his blood. What man, continues he, left to the free impulse of humanity, would imprint his kisses on the axe, that had let out the life of his dearest friend? The new impression was however made, and in many it was founded on ideas of the sincerest piety. It may be called *new*, because it seems to have had no place in the minds of those christians, who were contemporary to the period when the great tragedy was performed.

The first Crusade.

Constantine, as his historians relate, had seen a miraculous apparition of the cross; and under that sign he had conquered. From that time, the cross was no longer a mark of infamy; it waved on the banners of his army; and the Roman eagle was taught to stoop before it. Out of compliment to the master of the world, had no pious impulse helped the bias, it was natural that respect should be shewn to this favoured sign.

Pilgrimages

## BOOK I.

Pilgrimages to the holy land soon became frequent, and soon they were fashionable. Even after the destruction of the Western empire, the journey was attended with no peculiar difficulties, because the new kingdoms which arose continued to profess the christian faith. But in the seventh century the great change took place; when the disciples of Mahomet, a people divided from us by religion, by language, and by manners, rose, like a dark cloud, in the East, and spread themselves over the surface of many kingdoms. Still were the pilgrims permitted to resort to Jerusalem: the pious travellers came not empty-handed; it was besides a species of devotion, of which the infidels were themselves rather fond; and curiosity would be pleased at the sight of such a motly concourse of strangers from every corner of Europe. Mecca, on its brightest days, could hardly boast of a fairer spectacle.

Thus, for many years, continued this wondrous practice; when the Saracens, masters of the land, no longer pleased with the idle scene, or irritated by the misconduct of the pilgrims, or apprehensive, not without reason, that enthusiasm might at last prompt them to meditate designs against the state; began to shew them fewer marks of kindness, and even oppressed those of the christian name, who were settled amongst them. Of this oppression and of their own ill-treatment, they told a piteous and exaggerated tale, on their return to Europe; and dreadful indeed, they said, it was, that the holy places should be possessed by the declared foes to the religion of Christ! To attempt their rescue however was an act of solemn chivalry, which only the lapse of ages could bring to maturity.

The

The Grecian emperors, indeed, were ever at war with the Ottoman powers; but it was to defend their own frontiers, which the enemy daily invaded with success. The blood ran back upon the heart, and the proud towers of Constantinople trembled for their own security. It was no time to think of foreign conquests.—The Goths, the Lombards, the Franks, and other nations, which now rose into power, in the West, were embroiled in domestic quarrels, or occupied with schemes of self-preservation. Even from the infidels themselves they had reason to fear the most ruinous incursions: already they were in possession of the most fertile provinces of Spain, and the fate of Spain seemed to hover over the other states of Europe. Common policy should have told them, that the best security against the inroads of an enemy is, to carry war into his own territories. But, I have said, that the European powers were themselves unsettled.

It was only towards the close of the eleventh century, that the Western christians conceived the design of a general confederation against the infidels of the East. Gregory the seventh, the man whose virtues I praised, whose abilities I admired, but whose extravagances I censured, seems first to have adopted the grand idea. Historians tell us<sup>b</sup>, that he was moved to it by the melancholy recital of the sufferings of the Christians, who groaned under the Ottoman yoke. It might indeed be that, knowing how powerfully a tale of distress operated on the human mind, he would not lose its effect; and therefore urged it as an efficacious motive, whereby to accomplish more easily his designs. But he was

<sup>b</sup> Fleury and others.

BOOK I. too wife a man, I think, to give much weight, in his own mind, to a circumstance in itself so trifling. These christians were not numerous, and might readily have withdrawn from the hand which oppressed them.—Nor can I for a moment suppose, he would deign to give a single thought to the suggestion, that, by marching into the East, he should be able to give protection to the pilgrims, or facilitate their wild emigrations into Palestine. Gregory had other views. The infidel powers were become terrible to Europe; their depredations were feared upon every maritime coast; they had landed in Italy, and insulted the gates of Rome.

Europe, I have also said, was cruelly lacerated by internal wars; the hand of every man was armed against his brother; nor did it seem, in the ordinary course of things, that this deplorable scene could be brought to a conclusion. They had had recourse indeed to a singular expedient, which was called the *Truce of God*, whereby it was forbidden, under pain of excommunication, to make any attack on a private enemy, from the setting of the sun on Wednesday to its rising on Monday morning. This was some relief.—Commerce and agriculture, the finews and the wealth of states, were little known; or those thousand arts of peace, which give employment to the more populous nations of modern times.—But could the arms, which christians used for mutual destruction, be turned against a common enemy, the evils of domestic discord would cease, and Europe might again prosper and be happy<sup>c</sup>.

When in this light we view the crusades, they will not perhaps appear to have been dictated by that wild enthusiasm,  
to

<sup>c</sup> Fleury disc. 6.



to which generally they are ascribed. Not that I mean to insinuate that the multitude or their leaders were influenced by such rational motives: these can only belong to such men as Gregory or to Urban his successor. The marching crusaders waved their banners under a more animating impulse. They viewed themselves as the chosen soldiers of the Lord: they looked to the land of Palestine, as to a country they had a right to occupy, not reflecting, if the present possessors were ejected, that it should devolve to the Jews as an old inheritance; and they were promised that, in the blood of the unbelieving Mussulmen, their own crimes should be cancelled.

To the expedition, of which I shall now speak, had been a curious prelude in 1064, when seven thousand Germans, at the head of whom was Sigefroi, archbishop of Mayence, in a body took up the pilgrim's staff, and marched towards Jerusalem. They were attacked, even on good Friday, by a superior band of twelve thousand Arabs, and, after a stout defence, were on the point of falling a prey to the rapacious infidels, when unexpectedly, at the rising of the sun on Easter Sunday, they were rescued by an army of Turks, and conducted, under a strong escort, to the walls of Jerusalem<sup>d</sup>!

When the minds of men, from a concurrence of circumstances, have been long exposed to certain impressions—it matters not with what disgust or even horror they were at first received—gradually they become familiarised with them, and reason, or what by them is called reason, will soon be disposed to give them its solemn approbation. At this mo-

<sup>d</sup> Vertot hist. de Malte.

BOOK I. ment, the most trifling cause will produce the greatest effect: it is a spark which falls upon a mine of gunpowder.

A holy priest of the diocese of Amiens in France, named Peter, and from the solitary life he led, surnamed the hermit, tired of retirement, or prompted by the devotion of the times, quitted his cell, and wandered to Jerusalem. His mind sank within him, when, in the moments of fervent piety, he cast his eyes round, and saw the desolation of the holy places. With tears he lamented the circumstance to Simeon, the patriarch of the city, who in the zeal and character of his pilgrim soon discovered dispositions, from which possibly great advantage might be drawn. They often met; and it was finally agreed between them, that Simeon should write a letter, descriptive of the melancholy situation of things, to the bishop of Rome: this letter the hermit engaged to present, and to strengthen its contents by all the energy of his own representation. He further promised to visit the courts of the European princes, and to rouse them, if possible, to a general confederation for the relief of Jerusalem. Peter once more bent his knee at the holy sepulchre, and departed full of the great project, with which heaven, he thought, had inspired him. He presented his dispatches to Urban, and as he had engaged, accompanied them with a pathetic detail of the horrors, his own eyes had witnessed. The effect answered his most sanguine wishes: Urban was affected, and on the spot conceived the design of sending relief to the christians of Palestine.—Nor did the hermit delay the remaining part of his commission. He travelled, from court to court: was every where received as a messenger from heaven; and the enthusiasm, he himself felt, was easily transfused into the breasts of his hearers. Peter

Peter was an engine admirably adapted to the work he had undertaken. His zeal was ardent, his disinterestedness exemplary, and a spirit of mortification seemed to hold all his passions under the severest controul. His figure, indeed, was rather mean, and his physiognomy unpleasant; but his eye was piercing, and from his lips fell a torrent of impassioned eloquence, which hurried his audience into admiration and conviction. He spoke with the imposing air and authority of an inspired man. The alms that were given him he distributed among the poor; his food was dry bread, and he drank of the crystal stream: his feet were bare, and a single woollen tunic protected him from the inclemencies of various climes. And in all this, historians say, there did not appear the least affectation. Wherever he moved, crowds flocked to see the extraordinary man, and even he was deemed happy who could procure a few hairs from the faithful mule, the companion of his journeys and his toils<sup>c</sup>.

In 1095 was assembled a council at Clermont in Auvergne, at which Urban presided in person. Disturbances in Italy had compelled him to take refuge in France. In this synod was brought forward the business of the holy land; the pope addressed them in a discourse full of pathetic declamation and of some good sense; and the assembly, with enthusiasm, applauded the proposed undertaking, exclaiming with one voice, *deus lo volt, it is the will of heaven*. The pontiff seized the important moment. “The words you have uttered,” said he, were indeed dictated by heaven itself; I read “inspiration in them, and they shall go with you into  
“battle.”

<sup>c</sup> Daniel, Fleury.

BOOK I. “battle, to be your comfort and to be the sign, which shall distinguish the true foldiers of the lord.”—He then ordered that the figure of a *cross* should be borne on the breasts of those, who should enroll themselves in the sacred warfare; and still better to secure success to his project, (for he knew that enthusiasm was but a transient affection) he had recourse to an expedient, which promised to answer his warmest wishes<sup>f</sup>.

At all times, says the inimitable Fleury, whose reflections and ideas I am ever proud to copy, the pastors of the church had used a discretionary power in the relaxation of some parts of the canonical penances imposed on sinners, as their fervour, or other circumstances, seemed to require it: but never, before this day, had it been seen that, for one single work of piety, a sinner was discharged from all the temporal punishments, to which he might be liable before the justice of heaven. Urban undertook to do as much as this, when he promised a *plenary indulgence*, that is, a complete releasement from all temporal punishment, to the crusaders. It was an innovation in the discipline of the church, from which many abuses followed.—For more than two centuries, great difficulty had attended the enforcement of the penitentiary canons: In themselves they were very severe, and in process of time, so much had they been multiplied, that almost they might be deemed impracticable. From this circumstance arose the discipline of *commutation*, whereby whole years of penance might be redeemed in a few days. Pilgrimages to Rome, to Compostella, to Jerusalem, entered into this system of commutation; all which acts however were

<sup>f</sup> Daniel, Fleury.

were now left far behind by the new project of Urban, which to the meritorious exercise of a wandering life super-added the dreadful perils of war <sup>g</sup>.

In this first expedition, the crusaders were uninfluenced by any sordid motives: they looked for no salary, but what the papal indulgence held out to them.—Great certainly was the expence which attended the march of such numerous armies; but the rich principally defrayed it, whilst even the less wealthy contributed all they could procure, well knowing that the interest it would bring, was more highly to be prized than all human riches.—The sagacious Urban imagined another device, which was no less efficacious. Under the severest censures, he forbade the crusaders to be molested by their creditors, and granted them many other exemptions, whilst they wore the holy cross; and all their possessions he took into the protection of the holy see.

Such favours would be received with ardour. The nobility feeling a load of crimes, from the pillage of churches, and a long series of rapacity and oppression, eagerly accepted such easy terms of forgiveness: they had only to continue their favourite exercise of war, knowing that, if they fell, they should receive the blooming palm of martyrdom <sup>h</sup>.—The commonalty followed the example of their lords; indeed, they were their vassals and bound to servitude: but when all that was great and elegant in the provinces was seen hurrying into arms, he must have been lowly-minded truly, who could have been contented to have staid at home, bent over the anvil, or toiling behind his plough.

<sup>g</sup> Fleury disc. 6.

<sup>h</sup> Fleury ibid.

Churchmen,

## BOOK I.

Churchmen, whose pure hands should never be stained with blood, were not excluded from this meritorious service. They also had crimes, which called for expiation, though in strictness of penitentiary discipline, they were not subject to its canons. In some, motives of piety, but in more the love of novelty and dissipation, would preponderate.—Monks, with their abbots, broke from their retirement; threw aside the cowl, and glistened in the burnished helmet.—The softer sex felt a glow of courage rise within their breasts, and they prepared to enter on the toilsome march, in company of their husbands and their lovers.—Europe, in a word, was in general commotion: every eye sparkled with animation: in every town and in every village was heard the din of arms; whilst the crusader, leaning on his sword, uttered words of hardihood, talked of the battles he should win, and of the infidels he should massacre, and of the sins which would be forgiven him.—In all the provinces of France, says Daniel, private hostilities ceased in a moment; the most inveterate enemies became friends; and he that had not money strove to sell his possessions. The scene was astonishing.

The principal crusaders were Hugh, brother to the French king; Robert duke of Normandy, brother to William Rufus of England; Stephen count of Blois; Raymond count of Toulouse; Godfrey duke of Lorraine, with his brothers Baldwin and Eustach; with numberless inferior lords, knights, and gentlemen, bishops, abbots, monks, and priests.

By the beginning of 1096, the year after the council, the number of those, who had taken up the cross, was incredible.

They

They assembled round Peter the hermit, whom they regarded as the apostle of the crusade, and as the envoy from heaven. From him they had their orders, and they prepared to march.—The first division, an undisciplined and lawless rabble, was led on by one Walter, a French gentleman of some experience, but of little note. He was followed by the hermit, at the head of forty thousand men. A third division of fifteen thousand proceeded under Gotescalc, a German priest.—Great were the disorders these men committed; the latter division in particular; against whom the insulted people of Hungary rose up in arms, and it is said, not one of the fifteen thousand survived to tell the tale of their catastrophe.—Other bands, still more numerous, followed in wonderful succession, and as their excesses on the march were as great, many of them shared the just fate of their fellows<sup>1</sup>.

A more undisciplined and licentious body of men never drew the sword. In truth, there was but little discipline in the armies of the age, and in those of the crusaders there was still less: they were formed of volunteers from different nations, the chief over whom were independent of one another, and as lawless and licentious as they. The pope's legate alone held supreme command, and his voice, it was vainly expected, would awe into obedience this discordant multitude. Impatient of controul, they waited not till they should have put their feet on infidel land, to commence hostilities; wherever they marched, pillage, rapine, devastation marked their progress. They had, indeed, been vainly taught to believe, that heaven, by supernatural

<sup>1</sup> Daniel, Vertot.

## BOOK I.

assistance, would supply all their necessities, and therefore no provision had been made for subsistence on the march. Finding their wild expectations frustrated, they were even compelled to relieve their wants by plunder; and this it was that enraged the inhabitants of the countries through which they passed. They took their way towards Constantinople, through Hungary and Bulgaria.

The princes, whose names I have mentioned, apprehensive probably lest the greatness itself of the armament should disappoint its own purpose, permitted the multitude to march before them, and themselves, by different routes, escorted by the flower of their vassals, advanced towards the seat of the Eastern empire; for that was appointed the place of general rendezvous.

Alexis Comnenus, the Greek emperor, saw them approach with dismay. He had applied indeed to the Western christians for succour against the Turks, but he had only hoped that such a supply would be sent him, as, acting under his controul, might enable him to repel the enemy. Astonished he was to see his dominions overwhelmed, on a sudden, by such an inundation of licentious barbarians, who, though they pretended friendship, despised his subjects as unwarlike, and detested them as heretical. By all the arts of policy, in which he excelled, he endeavoured to divert the torrent; but while he employed professions, caresses, civilities, and seeming services towards the leaders of the crusade, he secretly regarded those imperious allies as more dangerous than the open enemies, by whom his empire had been invaded. Whilst the armies were round his capital he daily harraressed them by every art, which his genius, his power,



power, or his situation enabled him to employ; and having effected the difficult point of disembarking them in Asia, he entered into a private correspondence with Soliman, the Turkish emperor, and he practised every insidious device, for disappointing the enterprise, and discouraging the latins from attempting thenceforward any such prodigious migrations.

On the banks of the Bosphorus, opposite to Constantinople, the generals reviewed their armies, when the number of men was found to amount to one hundred thousand horse, and six hundred thousand foot, including all the attendants of the army.—The advanced parties, under Walter and the hermit, who had imprudently penetrated into the heart of the country, were soon overpowered, and cut to pieces. Peter was absent at Constantinople.—The grand army proceeded on their enterprise with more circumspection: but the scarcity of provisions, the excesses of fatigue, the influence of unexperienced climates, joined to the want of concert in their operations, and to the sword of a war-like enemy, destroyed the adventurers by thousands. Their zeal, however, their bravery, and their irresistible force still carried them forward.—After an obstinate siege, Nice, the seat of the Turkish empire, fell; they defeated Soliman in two great battles, and they sat down before Antioch. After various events, Antioch also surrendered, and the force of the enemy, who till now had proudly resisted, seemed entirely broken.

Flushed with success, the champions of the cross advanced towards Jerusalem, which they regarded as the consummation of their labours. By the detachments they had made

BOOK I. to secure their conquests, by desertion, and by disasters, their number was reduced to twenty thousand foot, and fifteen hundred horse; but these were still formidable, from their valour, their experience, and the obedience which, from past calamities, they had learned to pay to their leaders.—From the heights which command Jerusalem, they looked down on the holy city, their hearts beat for joy, they forgot their labours, and they demanded, in clamorous shouts, to be led up to the walls, tho' they were defended by an army of forty thousand men.

In formidable preparation, the generals took their posts round the devoted city; Godfrey of Bouillon, Robert of Normandy, Raymond of Toulouse, Robert of Flanders, and the valiant Tancred. Their resolution was unanimous, to die, or to conquer. Nor was the enemy within the walls less prepared or less determined. The siege lasted five weeks, during which, feats of heroism were achieved, which historians and poets have been careful to record and to magnify. A general assault was finally projected, and with the rising sun the trumpet sounded. It was Friday, the 15th of July, in 1099, till an hour after mid-day, with infinite resolution, the assailants maintained their posts, and the besieged resisted. But human strength could do no more, and Godfrey saw in the countenances of his men, that they despaired of success. They paused; when, on a sudden, the voice of their general sounded in their ears: “ My friends, cried he, heaven is for us; see yonder the  
“ clouds open, and an armed warrior descends upon the  
“ mountain of Olives; his shield darts lightning, and he  
“ beckons to us to advance!”—Raymond of Toulouse saw the  
the

the same vision. "It is St. George, said he, and he calls us to victory."—In a moment every arm was again braced; they reared their ladders, their rams shook the walls, their machines advanced, and Godfrey, sword in hand, was seen upon the ramparts, surrounded by his brave companions. The enemy gave way on all sides, and on all sides entered the victorious champions of the cross.

The carnage and scenes of horror, which now ensued, were, past description, dreadful. Imagination itself is lost in the painful image, and recoils. Neither arms defended the valiant, nor submission the timorous: no age or sex was spared. The streets of Jerusalem were covered with dead bodies.—But the triumphant warriors, after every enemy was subdued and slaughtered, immediately turned themselves, with sentiments of humiliation and contrition, towards the holy sepulchre. Without quitting their bloody armour, they advanced with reclined bodies, and with naked feet, to that sacred monument. They were met, with hymns of jubilation, by the christians they had rescued, and with them they sang anthems to their Saviour, who had there purchased their salvation by his agony and death. Enlivened by the presence of the place, devotion so overcame all their martial fury, that they dissolved in tears, and bore the appearance of every soft and tender sentiment. So inconsistent is human nature with itself! and so easily do all the passions ally, superstition especially and enthusiasm, with heroic courage, and fierce barbarity!

Eight days after this great event, Godfrey of Bouillon was unanimously chosen king of Jerusalem. Among all the warriors he was the most eminent: courage, wisdom, martial

## BOOK I.

martial skill, probity, religion, prudence, strength of body, and a stature which awed the beholder, marked him for a hero, and united all the suffrages in his favour. For one year only he held this romantic sceptre with a dignity, which the hand of Godfrey alone could have given to it: he died, and was lamented.—The other princes, having performed their vows, returned in haste to Europe, where neglected vassals, and the important concerns of state, had long bewailed their absence<sup>\*</sup>.

Thus ended the first crusade.—In whatever light it be considered, whether as an object of religion or of policy, I can discover no one permanent advantage that was derived from it. Jerusalem, indeed, was taken; the christian inhabitants would be protected, and future pilgrims would approach the holy places in more security. To the superstition of the age these might be weighty benefits; and who will say that, as such, they might not value them? Still their greatest advantages, it seems, should vanish, when contrasted with their concomitants, the direful events of war. But this also is a reflection to which, I know not, that the christians of the eleventh century would have subscribed.

From a redundancy of population, as Europe then was circumstanced, had, in great measure, arisen that excess of vice and lawless dissipation, which I described; and it was natural to imagine that the vast armies which marched to the East would be principally composed of the refuse of society: hence would the community at large be benefited.—So it happened, and not one in a hundred ever saw again  
his

<sup>\*</sup> Vertot, Fleury, Daniel, Hume, from original authors.

his native land; but this one together with the vices he had taken with him, returned loaded with all those which the Eastern nations were best able to supply. On the other hand, was the loss of so many brave, honest, and virtuous men, who fell sacrifices to the phrenzy of the times, to weigh as nothing in the scale of reason?—The intestine feuds, indeed, which so long had desolated Europe, ceased, for a moment, in their dread career, while the blood of infidels was pouring out round the walls of Jerusalem: but soon they resumed their wonted fury, and raged as before.

Asia was then the seat of the arts, of learning, and of commerce; and from thence, in process of time, Europe was to draw the most substantial benefits. In the first crusade these were not perceptible; nor could they be: but a channel, it must be owned, was then opened, thro' which, in a stream at first but small, they might begin to flow towards the Western world. The politicians of the age had not this object, I believe, in view: but is it from the foresight of man, or not rather from what appears to us a fortuitous concurrence of circumstances, that the most substantial advantages have been derived on human kind?

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.



THE  
H I S T O R Y  
OF THE LIVES OF  
ABEILLARD and HELOISA.

B O O K II.

*Abeillard goes to Laon and studies under Anselm—Returns to Paris and teaches.—Heloisa—Abeillard becomes her master—She escapes with him into Britany—He offers to marry her—They are married—He conveys her to Argenteuil—Fulbert's revenge—Pascal II. pope of Rome—France and England—Religious orders—Cluni—The Chartreuse—Fontevraud.*

Anno, 1100.

FROM the contentious scenes of war and politics, on BOOK II.  
which the pride of history loves to dwell, I return,  
with pleasure, to the more humble walk of biography.  
Thus the traveller, who, on the glaciers of Grindelwald  
or Chamoigny, has contemplated nature in her sublimest  
horrors, sinks to the vale below with gentler emotions,  
where he meets the creeping woodbine and the purling  
stream.

H

The

## BOOK II.

He goes to  
Laon and  
studies under  
Anselm.

The reader will recollect that he left Abeillard, just returned from Britany to Paris, rather disgusted of philosophical pursuits, and preparing to enter on the more important study of theology. His old master and competitor de Champeaux, elated with the new honours of the mitre, had withdrawn to Chalons.

Laon, an episcopal see, distant twenty-seven leagues from Paris, was at this time celebrated for its chair of divinity. There Anselm, a canon and dean of the chapter, had for many years taught, with the greatest applause: men of the first consequence in the church had been his scholars<sup>a</sup>. In this number must be reckoned de Champeaux himself. Abeillard looking round for a master, from whom he might draw some instruction in the new pursuit he was meditating, naturally fixed on Anselm. Independently of other considerations, the circumstance of his having taught the bishop of Chalons, would have some weight on his mind. The man we contend with, and conquer, is seldom deemed a contemptible antagonist.—He went to Laon.

“ I frequented, says he, the old man’s school, but it was soon evident, that all his celebrity was derived, not from the display of abilities, but from length of practice. He who approached him in anxious uncertainty, returned in a thicker cloud. To hear him was delightful; for he possessed an astonishing fluency of language; but in his words was neither reason nor common sense. You would have thought he were kindling a fire, when instantly the whole house was filled with smoke, in which not a single spark was visible. He was a tree, covered with a thick foliage,  
“ which

<sup>a</sup> Notæ ad hist. Cal.



“ which to the distant eye had charms; but on a nearer in-  
 “ spection there was no fruit to be found. I went up to this  
 “ tree in full expectation: my eye beheld that it was the  
 “ fig-tree, which, the Lord had cursed; or I said it might  
 “ be the oak with which the poet compares Pompey,

“ Stat magni nominis umbra,

“ Qualis frugifero quercus sublimis in agro.

“ Lucan. Phar.

“ And after this discovery, I reposed not many days under  
 “ its noxious shade<sup>b</sup>.”

The portrait is strongly taken, but repentment probably  
 pressed on the pencil in the darker colouring.

Of this same Anselm a curious anecdote is told by an old  
 author<sup>c</sup>, which, as it may serve to mark the character of  
 the age, I shall relate.—A considerable part of the gold and  
 jewels, belonging to the church of Laon, had been stolen.  
 The thief could not be discovered; whereupon a general  
 meeting of the canons and principal citizens was called.  
 Uncertain what to do, they unanimously agreed to take the  
 opinion of Anselm, who was esteemed the oracle of the town.  
 Anselm, deeply versed in the law and prophets, revolves  
 the whole business in his mind, and recollects at last the  
 passage in the book of Joshua, where it is related, in what  
 manner, a secret theft had been detected by the casting of  
 lots. “ It is my advice, said he, having weighed the mat-  
 “ ter most deliberately, that you try to discover the author  
 “ of this horrid crime by the *ordeal* of water. Let an infant  
 “ be taken from each parish, and cast into a vessel of holy

<sup>b</sup> Hist. Cal.

<sup>c</sup> Notæ ad hist. Cal.

BOOK II. “ water: from the child which sinks, will the guilty parish  
 “ be known. Then from each house of this parish take  
 “ another infant: which will shew you the guilty house.  
 “ You can be no longer at a loss: throw every man and  
 “ woman belonging to the house into tubs of holy water,  
 “ and guilt will be concealed no longer.”—The experiment,  
 I presume, succeeded; for the same author relates that the  
 thief was a person, by name also Anselm, who, under the  
 cloak of extraordinary piety, had imposed on many, and to  
 whose care had been entrusted the rich ornaments of the  
 church.

Abeillard, whom the emptiness of this wordy veteran  
 could not fail to disgust, began to appear less frequently at  
 his lectures. It was a more prudent step, than to have at-  
 tempted a direct attack on the great name of his master.  
 Age had given some check to the petulancy of his temper,  
 or by experience he had learned wisdom. His absence how-  
 ever from the schools was soon noticed; it was construed by  
 those, among the scholars, who plumed themselves most on  
 their abilities, into a reflection on their own discernment.  
 He dares to undervalue the great Anselm, said they. The  
 old man was himself irritable and jealous: he had instructed  
 the brightest geniuses of the age, and been admired by them:  
 was this child of Aristotle alone to withhold his applause,  
 just as his sun, with its full effulgence, was setting in the  
 West! The suggestions of the young men, whose pride was  
 also piqued, only served to fan into a wilder flame the in-  
 dignation of the old professor<sup>d</sup>.

<sup>d</sup> Hist. Calam.

It happened that, as one day the scholars were jokingly converſing together, one of them asked Abeillard, what he thought about the ſtudy of the ſcriptures? The queſtion was captious, as they well knew, how little attention he had hitherto given to thoſe divine books. He replied that, if religious improvement be the object, no ſtudy certainly was ſo ſalutary; but added that, to him it was matter of great ſurpriſe, how any one, who had the ſmalleſt pretenſions to literature, could poſſibly imagine that, beſides the ſcriptures themſelves and ſome eaſy expoſitor, any other aſſiſtance ſhould be deemed neceſſary to render them moſt perfectly intelligible.—The propoſition was received with ſcorn, and inſultingly they asked Abeillard, whether he perhaps might think himſelf equal to the undertaking. “ I am ready to do it, ſaid he; chuſe what book, you pleaſe, from the old or new teſtament, one that is rarely explained in the ſchools, and with it allow me but a ſingle commentator.” —It was inſtantly agreed to, and they fixed on the prophecy of Ezekiel<sup>c</sup>.

The next morning he acquainted the young men, that he was prepared to fulfill his engagement. His friends adviſed him to be leſs precipitate; they told him he was a novice in theology; and that he ſhould proceed, in ſo arduous an undertaking, with the greateſt circumſpection and leiſure. “ It is not by leiſure, answered he angrily, but by energy of genius, that I pretend to maſter the great heights of ſcience: either I will be heard when, and in what manner, it pleaſes me beſt, or, this moment, I am free from my engagement.”

<sup>c</sup> Hiſt. Calam.

But

## BOOK II.

But few were present at the first lecture: the attempt was deemed both arrogant and ridiculous. He acquitted himself, however, so much to the satisfaction of his hearers, that they requested he would proceed, and they complimented him on the precision and sublimity of his comment. The following days, the whole town pressed to hear him; every word he uttered was carefully taken down; and, as it had before happened at Melun and Paris, the streets of Laon echoed with the name of Abeillard<sup>f</sup>.

The sound soon reached the ears of Anselm. His mind, for some days, had been cruelly on the fret: this youth, whose hours in the study of divinity hardly measured his years of practice, in one single night, had penetrated into the obscure mysteries of Ezekiel, and had drawn that veil aside, which himself perhaps had not dared to touch. The circumstance was insulting, and he vowed revenge. But though pious minds can be sometimes swayed by the passions of sinners, they are wonderfully adroit at the discovery of motives, which, to their own eyes, at least, may sanctify their proceedings.

Anselm had, amongst his scholars, two, whom he particularly esteemed, and whose abilities were superior to the rest, Albericus, a native of Rheims, and Lotulphus, from Novara in Lombardy; which place however was rendered far more famous for giving birth to Peter bishop of Paris, the celebrated *master of sentences*. These men, buoyed up by a sense of their own superiority and the flattering approbation of Anselm, would feel more poignantly the burst of applause, which, in a moment, had raised Abeillard far above them.

<sup>f</sup> Hist. Calam.

them. It was their advice, that the expofitor of Ezekiel fhould be interdicted from proceeding any further in his public comment.—The old man acceded joyfully to their propofal. He alone was theologal in Laon, and without his permiffion no one could be empowered to give lectures. The prohibition was notified to Abeillard, under this pretext that, fhould any error, peradventure, creep into the expofition of the prophecy, which, (from his inexperience in theology, might too eafily happen) the whole blame would be imputed to Anfelm; that he could not expofe the whole glory of a well-earned reputation upon fo flippery a furface; and that religion, in a fecret whifper, had told him to be circumfpect.

The fcholars, who patronifed Abeillard, heard the news of this event with indignation; the thin veil which covered the real motives of Anfelm's conduct was eafily penetrated; but all oppofition, they faw, would be vain. Abeillard refolved to withdraw; Laon was not a theatre wide enough for the difplay of his abilities, and the grey hairs of the theologal called for fome refpect. Anfelm triumphed in his fuccefs; even the day, on which, by his conjuring fagacity, he had proved his name-fake to be a facrilegious robber, was not half fo glorious.

As the memoirs, from which the ftory of the life of Abeillard is principally drawn, were written by himfelf, and that after, by a feries of misfortunes and ill-ufage, he had been feverely irritated, fome allowance fhould be made for partial narration. For however little difpofed he might really be to depart from truth, it is too obvious, that objects take  
their

BOOK II. their tinge from the complection of our own minds. In an instant how changed is the scene, when to the varied beauties of the rising sun succeed murky clouds and a lowering sky! It must also be confessed that the conduct of the young man was often reprehensible. His abilities were of a superior cast, and he was gifted with a penetration, which at once laid open to his eye the whole texture of character: from this he selected the weakest parts, and he took a malignant pleasure in exhibiting them to public view. Such a man could hardly have a friend, for he seemed to have no indulgence for the weaknesses of human nature. Himself had not yet experienced how low the greatest minds may sink. Unremittingly he had pursued the object of his ambition, and this was of a nature only to draw into action those powers of his soul, which were pure and intellectual. From this circumstance he would deem highly of himself, and viewing others in the same medium, them naturally he might despise. The judgment of youth is often erroneous.

He returns to  
Paris and  
teaches.

Abeillard once more returned to Paris. Fame had not been silent during his residence at Laon; it was known with what splendor he had opened his new career; theology had woven a garland to encircle his brows; his friends were waiting to receive him; and the doors of the schools stood open. He began his lectures with the prophecy of Ezekiel, completing the exposition he had commenced in the country. His auditors were charmed; the first philosopher, they said, was become the first divine. Multitudes of fresh scholars flowed in from all quarters; he therefore judged proper to resume his old lecture of philosophy<sup>b</sup>. The sister sciences were

<sup>b</sup> Hist. Calam.

were pleased with this amiable union; they had too long been kept asunder from each other; and both from the mouth of Abeillard received new strength and new charms.

In the following words does a contemporary speak of these times in a letter addressed to Abeillard: “ No distance of  
“ country, no height of mountains, no depth of vallies, no  
“ intricate journey beset with perils and thieves, could  
“ with-hold your scholars from you. Rome sent her chil-  
“ dren to receive your instruction: she who had been the  
“ mistress of every science now confessed her inferiority.  
“ The youth of Britain crowding to their shores were not  
“ intimidated by the sea which met their eyes, or the bil-  
“ lows that broke at their feet: in spite of danger, they  
“ cleared the dreadful pass. The more remote islands dis-  
“ missed their savage sons. Germany, Spain, Flanders,  
“ the people of the North and of the South, flocked to you;  
“ in their mouths your name only was heard; they admir-  
“ ed, they praised, they extolled your abilities. I speak  
“ not of those whom the walls of Paris enclosed, nor of the  
“ inhabitants of our neighbouring or more distant pro-  
“ vinces: from you they as ardently sought for wisdom, as  
“ if all its treasures had been there locked up. In a word,  
“ moved by the splendor of your genius, by the charms of  
“ your elocution, and by the acuteness of your penetra-  
“ tion, to you they all approached, as to the source from  
“ which science flowed in the purest stream<sup>1</sup>.”

But the theology of the times consisted in little else than a bare exposition of scripture passages; a method however, by which, had it been pursued in a cool and rational manner,

<sup>1</sup> Fulco ad Abeil. p. 218.

BOOK II. religion might have gained much. It would not have been loaded with that superfluity of idle matter, which has disfigured its native simplicity; and to which an undue importance has ever been given. The commentators of the twelfth century were not satisfied with a plain and literal explanation of the text: they thought that, under each line, lay something of a spiritual or mystical meaning, and of this they were ever in quest. It was the bad taste of the age, to which unadorned simplicity could give no pleasure: or else the literal sense was to their apprehension peculiarly difficult, from their ignorance of the primitive languages, in which the books of scripture were written; and because they knew so little of the history and of the manners of ancient times. What we do not understand is the more susceptible of a mystic interpretation, and rather than own our ignorance, what absurdities will not be advanced<sup>k</sup>?

From the licentiousness of allegorical exposition any maxims might be drawn. They read in the gospel of St. Luke, that our Saviour, before his passion, told his disciples, that swords would be necessary: they answered, behold here are two swords. He replied; it is enough.—The sense of this passage is obvious; but commentators discovered that, by the two swords were signified the spiritual and temporal powers, by which the world is governed; and that these powers belonged both to the church, because the two swords were in the hands of the apostles. The church indeed, they said, should herself only exercise the spiritual power, and intrust the other to the prince. Our saviour said to Peter; put up thy sword into the scabbard; that is, the sword, Peter,

<sup>k</sup> Fleury disc. 5.



Peter, is thine; but it is not in thy hand it should be used; give it to the Prince, who shall employ it, as thou shalt order and direct<sup>1</sup>.—On such deductions as these was grounded the deposing doctrine of Rome, and all the vain superstructure of prerogative and privilege, which the church exercised, with an unbounded sway, through the long period of many years.

In the full blow of literary honours, which the breath of envy did not attempt to blast, and secure in the applause of an admiring public, the days of Abeillard now flowed on in one unruffled stream. The same tide brought wealth and glory with it. But as rivalry and opposition ceased, so, on his side, ceased those vigorous exertions, which had made him what he was. The nervous system, I have elsewhere observed, upon the tone of which all our animation depends, soon relaxes, when the spur is withdrawn that excited its vibrations; and when this happens, a languor ensues, with which the whole man sympathises in wonderful accord.—Affections began to rise, to which hitherto he had been a stranger, and he found he was not that hero, which, in vanity of mind, he had once imagined. Even Hercules, in the gay court of Omphale, threw down his club, and submitted to hold the distaff.

Paris was, at this time, a scene of general dissipation: it was so, as the principal residence of the French court, and as an academy crowded with the youth of different nations. No discipline could have held such an unruly multitude in controul. The description, which historians give of the vice and depravity of the scholars, can only be conceived by

<sup>1</sup> Fleury disc. 5.

BOOK II. viewing modern seminaries of learning.—Abeillard, in the midst of this alluring scene, would hardly withstand its fascination. He was young, handsome, agreeable. The splendour of his public character, as it drew on him the eye of admiration, so was it a passport, which admitted him into the first circles of Paris. His company was eagerly sought for: he charmed in conversation; the tone of his voice was melodious; he sang well, and his songs were often pieces of his own composition<sup>m</sup>.

Speaking of himself at this period, he says: “It is in the  
 “lap of prosperity that the mind swells with foolish vanity;  
 “its vigour is enervated by repose, while the indulgence of  
 “pleasure completes the victory. At a time, when I  
 “thought myself the first philosopher in Europe, nor  
 “feared to be disturbed in my seat of eminence, then it  
 “was, that I who had been a pattern of virtue, first loosened  
 “the rein at the call of passion. In proportion as I had  
 “risen higher on the scale of literary excellence, the lower  
 “did I sink into vicious depravity. I quitted those paths  
 “of virtue, which all my predecessors had trodden with so  
 “much renown. Pride and pleasure were the monsters  
 “that subdued me<sup>n</sup>.”—In this situation of undisturbed repose, of dissipation, and of honour, Abeillard had passed near five years, extolled as the first master of the age, courted by the great, loved by the gay, feared by the ignorant, and admired by all.

Heloisa.

There was then in Paris a young lady, of great beauty, but whom her talents and extraordinary advance in science, rendered an object of general admiration. She was in the richest

<sup>m</sup> Ep. Helois. 1<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>n</sup> Hist. Calam.

richest bloom of youth, having reached her eighteenth year<sup>o</sup>; a period, when the mind, if properly cultivated, begins to expand on the countenance, and to give it an expression which it had not before. Heloisa, for this was the young lady's name, lived with her uncle Fulbert, a canon of the cathedral church.—By some she is said to have been descended from the illustrious house of Montmorency; whilst others pretend, she was the natural daughter of a priest<sup>p</sup>.—Be this as it may; nature had formed her of her best materials, and she was the darling of her uncle.

The old man had spared no expence in the education of his niece. In other regards niggardly, here he was profuse; and whatever, in the literary arts of the age, the best masters had to give, that he endeavoured to procure for Heloisa.—She is represented as a prodigy in science: but it should seem as if her encomiasts, willing to delineate a phenomenon in the female world, had brought together every excellence their minds could fancy, and had presented the rich gift to the niece of Fulbert. It was not only in the circles of Paris, they say, that her name was familiar: It had penetrated to the extreme parts of the kingdom<sup>q</sup>.—When learning is possessed by few, a very ordinary portion is viewed with admiration. We may judge by comparison; and can it be presumed that, in the gloomy æra of the twelfth century, even to Heloisa science would have unlocked those treasures, which the female candidates of modern times would perhaps ask of her in vain? She was acquainted, it is said, with the best authors of ancient Rome, had been deeply initiated in the philosophy of the age, and  
knew

<sup>o</sup> Vie d'Abeil. p. 48.

<sup>p</sup> Bayle letter H.

<sup>q</sup> Præf. Apologet.

BOOK II. knew what the wise men of antiquity had taught. The Latin and Greek languages were familiar to her, and even rising from the cradle, she had been heard to lisp the psalms of David, in the very language of their royal author<sup>r</sup>.—When retirement and the application of maturer years had given full improvement to her mind; I doubt not, but she became possessed of all these high accomplishments, which, at the age of eighteen, the generosity of anticipation seems to have bestowed upon her.—She was born in the first or second year of the century.

Abeillard, though become a man of pleasure, had not lost that delicacy of mind, which is sometimes so constitutional, as to remain with us even in the absence of virtue. He had ever detested low vice, and the company of abandoned women was peculiarly odious to him<sup>f</sup>. Public dissipation was incompatible with the dignity of his station; nor could his attendance on the schools permit him to frequent the society of those ladies, who would not, he thinks, have been insensible to the charms of his person and conversation.

It was at this moment of self-complacency and enervation, that began his acquaintance with the accomplished Heloise. The house, where her uncle resided, was contiguous to the public schools. Doubtless he had often seen her, and often heard of her uncommon abilities; but till now such objects were little calculated to make a sensible impression. In the retired situation and amiable qualities of this young lady, he soon discovered all that his heart could wish for. That he himself was irresistible, he had the fullest conviction. “ So great, says he, was my reputation, and so captivating the  
“ attractions

<sup>r</sup> Præf. Apologet.

<sup>f</sup> Hist. Calam.

“ attractions of my youth and person, that I feared not to  
 “ be rejected by any woman, whom I should deign to ho-  
 “ nour with my regard.” Yet was not this vain philosopher  
 very distant from his fortieth year. BOOK II.

Besides these personal attractions, there were other circumstances, which might seem no less flattering. He well knew the progress Heloisa had made in learning, and how warmly her soul was engaged in the pursuit. Could he draw her into a correspondence of letters, (a proposal which he doubted not she would embrace with ardour,) he foresaw every success in the event. Then he could flatter her vanity with less danger of suspicion: he could, with more freedom and in stronger colours, express the emotions of his heart; and though her company might be sometimes denied him, he could by this intercourse, at least, keep alive the impression on her mind<sup>†</sup>. The plan was concerted.—But it is not said how long this correspondence lasted, nor is it said, whether he was admitted to any private interview with her. Heloisa would be delighted by the marked attention of this great man; nor from inexperience and from the high opinion she had of him, could she, for a moment, suspect his intentions. Abeillard must have recoiled when he viewed the infamy of his design: it could not possibly be that, at once, he should embark in a fixed scheme of seduction. He says it however himself in words which cannot be mistaken<sup>‡</sup>; and if so, he must be pronounced a much worse man, than otherwise I could be disposed to believe him. In the high regions of romantic speculation he had lost sight of, or never known, those amiable virtues, without which the  
 greatest

<sup>†</sup> Hist. Calam.

<sup>‡</sup> Ibid.

BOOK II. greatest talents may be deemed a curse from the hand of providence.

Warmed by acquaintance and the intercourse of sentiment, to which the unguarded innocence of Heloisa would give additional charms, the affections of Abeillard grew into passion. He that should have been her friend, became her lover; and the reserve and distant correspondence, he had hitherto maintained, could satisfy no longer. He meditated other schemes; but, had his intentions been honourable, where was the necessity of disguise? Fulbert would have opened his doors, and have been proud in the society of Abeillard.

The philosopher well imagined, that the respect, produced by the great celebrity of his name, with which the young lady received his addresses, would gradually wear down into a more familiar behaviour, could he have the happiness of seeing her, and of conversing with her more frequently<sup>u</sup>; and his invention hit on a scheme, which proved him a finished master in the art of seduction.—He began to shew great attention to some of Fulbert's friends; and when he thought them secure, he opened to them his wishes, which were, that they would propose to the good man to take him into his house as a boarder. Its being so near to the schools, he said, would be a great convenience; that he should not hesitate upon terms, however high they might be; that the bustle and solicitude, necessarily attendant on house-keeping, deranged that equanimity, which study called for; and that his expences were heavier than he could conveniently support. Fulbert, he knew, was very

<sup>u</sup> Hist. Calam.

very fond of money; and as the first of his desires was to procure for his niece every means for her further improvement, he trusted, that his proposal, coming in so eligible a form, would not be rejected<sup>w</sup>.—The old canon swallowed the bait with eagerness. Money, and with it the prospect of benefiting Heloisa, accorded with all the feelings of his heart. It was no trifling circumstance either, that Abeillard should put his foot over his threshold, and that he should be permitted to sit down at table with a man, whom the world admired. Thus vanity, which never dies in the human breast, hung her bias also on the side of his ruling passions.

Of Fulbert an anecdote is recorded, which proves his piety to have been equal to his affection for money and for Heloisa.—The almoner of Henry, the French king, instigated by an inordinate devotion, had stolen from the chapel of his master, a large portion of the back bone of Saint Ebrulfus. Among the first friends of this thief was canon Fulbert, and to prove to him the excess of his love, he made him a present of what he esteemed dearest in the world, this holy relic. Fulbert had had it long in his possession, when hearing probably by what iniquitous means it had been procured, he feared to detain it any longer. He assembled his friends, proposed the important business, and earnestly besought their advice. They agreed the back bone had been stolen, and could not with a safe conscience be kept: the prior of a neighbouring convent was therefore sent for; to him was committed the sacred treasure with injunction, that he should forthwith convey it, my author

<sup>w</sup> Hist. Calam.

BOOK II. says, to Utica, but I suppose to the chapel from whence it had been taken. This at least the principle of restitution should have suggested\*.

When Abeillard had obtained the old man's permission to remove to his house, the first thing the latter proposed to him was, that he would take some charge of his niece. The philosopher assented. That he would dedicate much of his time to her instruction, seemed an unreasonable request: finally, however, he entreated him that, should he have any vacant moments after his return from school, either by night or day, them he would give to Heloisa; and still to evince how much he prized his instruction, it was his request, he said, that should he find her negligent or inattentive, he would chastise her severely.

“ Viewing this simplicity of the uncle, I was not less  
 “ astonished, observes Abeillard, than if I had beheld a  
 “ shepherd entrusting his lamb to the care of a hungry wolf.  
 “ He committed his niece to me, to be taught, and to be  
 “ corrected, as I pleased; which, in fact, was supplying me  
 “ with every occasion, not only of gaining her affections,  
 “ but likewise with a power of forcing her, by chastisement,  
 “ to comply with my desires, should persuasion prove inef-  
 “ fectual. But there were two considerations, with which  
 “ all suspicion of evil was incompatible; the love he felt  
 “ for Heloisa, and the opinion he entertained of my vir-  
 “ tue.”—The base seducer felt not himself the weight of  
 these motives. Fulbert might have been simple; but it was  
 a simplicity which did honour to his heart. Suspicion never  
 dwells in an honest mind. I am almost tempted to believe  
 that

\* Oderic. l. 7. Hist. Eccl.

† Hist. Cal.



that the stigma of covetousness had been fixed on Fulbert by the hand of inveterate resentment. BOOK II.

The agitation and joy of mind, felt by Heloisa, when she heard who the stranger was that was coming to reside under her uncle's roof, will be easily conceived. To the high opinion fame had long impressed on her mind, was now joined a more intimate acquaintance with the man; she had conversed with him, and she had received letters from his hand, at once expressive of affection and of the idea he entertained of her abilities. This Abeillard was now to be her master, and she was to enjoy his society in the ease of domestic intercourse. For an instant, she could not suspect him capable of any interested or insidious views: such thoughts are, at least, inconsistent with the candid innocence of youth. She saw him arrive with such emotions as, the state of mind I have described, would naturally raise; but the moment, which Heloisa viewed as the brightest of her life, was, in fact, clouded with the lowering decrees of fate!

As the base designs of Abeillard had been maturely projected, he would proceed to their accomplishment by all those means which circumstances offered, and with an artifice, that well knew how to avail itself of the most trifling incident. The sagacious logician who had foiled the first masters of the art, at their own weapons, now entered the lists with a girl of eighteen: it was a noble contest!—The gradations from respect to love, through all their intermediate shades, would be sensibly marked on the soul of Heloisa, and Abeillard would read them on her countenance.—He very minutely, and with little delicacy, details the circumstances of their studious hours, and he tells the

Abeillard becomes her master.

## BOOK II.

progress his pupil soon made in the art of love<sup>a</sup>. Indeed, the most tried virtue could not have withstood this powerful ordeal. Heloisa began to love; and from a combination of incidents, joined to a natural cast of dispositions, such a strength of passion took possession of her soul, as the wild annals of romance have never, I believe, equalled.

Abeillard now lost all relish for the schools; Aristotle and scripture comments could please no longer. His lessons were but a repetition of what he had said before, and even these were delivered with an indifference, a precipitancy, and a visible absence of mind, which shewed that his attention was engaged on other objects<sup>a</sup>.—His genius, however, was not absolutely idle. As he often quotes the Latin poets, it is probable that he took delight in their compositions: I have also already remarked, that he was not himself without some pretensions to poetry. Whatever talents he might have, the present moment would be sure to call them into play. Love makes poets of us all. For, as the seat of that passion lies chiefly in the imagination, it is natural that those ideas should please best, which are in unison with it. Absent from Heloisa, his employment was to celebrate her praises: he composed sonnets, laid his sonnets at her feet, and he sang them to the tenderest airs<sup>b</sup>.

Many years after, thus does Heloisa speak of these times, of Abeillard, and of his compositions: warm with the recollection she says to him: “ You possessed, Abeillard, two  
“ qualifications, a tone of voice and a grace in sing-  
“ ing, which gave you the controul over every female  
“ heart. These powers were peculiarly yours; for I know  
“ not

<sup>a</sup> Hist. Calam.<sup>a</sup> Ibid.<sup>b</sup> Ep. Cal. Ep. Helois. 1<sup>a</sup>.

“ not that they ever fell to the lot of any other philosopher.  
 “ To soften, by playful amusement, the stern labours of  
 “ philosophy, you composed several sonnets on love and  
 “ on similar subjects. These you were often heard to sing,  
 “ when the harmony of your voice gave new charms to the  
 “ beauty of your language. In all circles only Abeillard  
 “ was talked of: even the most ignorant, who could not  
 “ judge of composition, were enchanted by the melody of  
 “ your voice. Female hearts could not withstand the im-  
 “ pression. Thus was my name soon carried to distant  
 “ nations, for our loves were the theme of all your songs.  
 “ Women envied my happiness: they saw you were endowed  
 “ with every accomplishment of mind and body<sup>c</sup>.”

These poems, as they were handed about, and continued to be very fashionable songs, even in countries remote from Paris, were written probably in the rude language of the times. But from the pen of genius, nothing truly can fall which may seem rude and uncultivated. We have to lament, however, that these compositions of Abeillard have all sunk in the devouring stream of time: I have otherwise no doubt, but the French nation would have them to boast of, as the elegant maiden productions of their earliest muse.—The Trouveres in the northern provinces, and the more elegant Troubadours in the south, had not then attuned their reeds to sing the loves and the martial prowess of peerless lords and ladies.—The *roman de la rose* is by some critics ascribed to Abeillard, but with no semblance of truth: indeed, it is generally admitted, that it was begun in the thirteenth century,

<sup>c</sup> Ep. Helois. 1<sup>a</sup>.

BOOK II. century, and finished by John de Meun, the gay poet of the court of Philip le bel, a hundred years after<sup>d</sup>.

Abeillard's scholars viewed, with sentiments of regret and pity, the falling off of their master. It was an effect, however, for which they could easily account, because, from his entrance into the house of Fulbert, they had noticed its progress. His fair pupil, they said, was the Dalila that had broken the strength of Samson. Fortunately, however, there was no de Champeaux to glory in his fall.—His connection with Heloisa could be no longer secret: it became the topic of general conversation. Fulbert alone seemed ignorant of it; even when he was advised to look to his niece, he disregarded the admonition. His love for her, and his opinion of Abeillard, had tied a bandage over his eyes, which no suggestions could unbind.—Thus, for some months, did the deception continue; and the lovers were unmolested in their literary amours. Sometimes, that the old man might not be roused by the smallest shadow of suspicion, Abeillard assumed the tone of a master, and even pretended to chastise Heloisa, as he had been empowered to do<sup>e</sup>.

The clap of thunder came at last; the bandage fell off; and poor Fulbert saw how miserably he had been deceived. It was a situation of deep distress. The man, in whose breast, he thought, resided all the virtues, had betrayed him, and Heloisa was corrupted! His heart sank within him. When he had a little recovered from the shock, his request was, that the seducer would leave his house. Too much broken was his heart to indulge itself in the strong emotions

<sup>d</sup> Præf. Apologet. Bayle letter A.

<sup>e</sup> Hist. Calam.

emotions of anger or revenge. Abeillard says, that he only grieved<sup>f</sup>. But he describes more fully, and with some affectation, the parting scene betwixt himself and Heloisa. How excessive was their affliction, he says; how much he blushed; how his heart was torn, when he saw the tears of the dear girl; what a storm agitated her mind at the view of his sufferings; that they wailed not their own misery; it was for one another only that they lamented.—Abeillard withdrew, and Heloisa remained to meet the reproaches of her uncle, and in solitude to reflect on the state into which she was fallen.

But the reproaches of Fulbert fell heaviest on himself: it was to his own wilful blindness he had to charge the misconduct of his niece. Abeillard's treachery, indeed, was too foul a crime ever to be forgiven, yet even here how glaring had been his own folly!—Heloisa felt for the painful situation of her uncle, to whose care she owed so much; but in the love she bore to Abeillard was sunk every other thought, which reflection might have suggested. Conscience is silent, when the ruling passion, with sovereign controul, holds possession of the heart. Her attachment to books, reverence for Fulbert, ideas of religion, respect for the world, delicacy of female character, were all absorbed in the admiration of the man, who had seduced her.

Fable informs us, that Argus, with a hundred eyes, could not guard the nymph that was committed to his charge. Love inspires a fortitude, accompanied by a wiliness of invention, which no obstacle can withstand. Heloisa contrived to acquaint her lover with all the particulars of her situation; and

She escapes with him into Britany.

<sup>f</sup> Hist. Calam.

BOOK II. and she acquainted him, with a triumph of mind that expressed the peculiarity of her character, that she was pregnant, and must instantly have his advice in the course it might be proper for her to take; that her uncle's house was no longer a fit situation for her<sup>g</sup>.

The necessity of removing her was evident; but, considering the suspicious jealousy with which she was guarded, the step would be attended with great hazard. Abeillard never found his invention on a severer rack; but as he corresponded with Heloisa, who informed him of all that passed, he had reason to rely on her address for success in the attempt. By a show of resignation to the will of Fulbert, his vigilance began to slacken: Heloisa therefore gave notice that soon she should be able to escape. It was agreed between the lovers, that he should procure her a proper disguise, and that, the first dark evening her uncle should be from home, she would be ready to attend him. They were to make for Britany, where he had friends who would receive her.—The day came. Fulbert, lulled into security, had engaged to make a visit into the country, and was not to return till late. Of this fortunate event, notice was instantly given<sup>h</sup>.

The tedious hours passed away, and night fell. Abeillard, with the disguise he had procured, which was a nun's habit<sup>i</sup>, was waiting at the appointed place: He received Heloisa into his arms; conveyed her out of Paris; and, with all possible expedition, proceeded towards Britany, where his sister Dionysia, who had been apprised of the design, was ready

<sup>g</sup> Hist. Cal.

<sup>h</sup> Vie d'Abeil. p. 63,

<sup>i</sup> Ep. Abeil. 5<sup>a</sup>

ready to give them an asylum<sup>k</sup>.—Having thus disposed of his charge, the philosopher hastened back to Paris. BOOK II

Fulbert, finding his niece had escaped, and suspecting what the cause was which had impelled her to it, was driven into the wildest rage. To his grief and first pain, was now added the sentiment of disgrace, which was brought on his family. But what to do, or how to revenge the insult, he was equally uncertain. When, in the paroxysm of his fury, he thought of the most signal vengeance, and only looked to the dagger as his friend; the recollection of his dear Heloisa rose full before him, and averted the bloody purpose. She was in the hands of his enemies, who might retaliate perhaps the fatal stroke which should fall on Abeillard.—When, in cooler moments, he projected forcibly to seize the traitor, and to confine him in some place of security, he soon discovered how foolish the attempt would be: Abeillard, he heard, was surrounded by his creatures, was prepared against any attack, and was even ready himself to strike the first blow, should the smallest violence be intended against him<sup>l</sup>.—Again the old man had recourse to tears, and the unavailing suggestions of impotent passion.

Heloisa, in the mean time, was delivered of a son, whom she called Astrolabus. The motive for so whimsical a name is not assigned; but probably, as her own name was said to bear some reference to the sun, she thought proper to allude to the stars in giving a name to her child.

The news of this event had a happy effect on the mind of Abeillard; it softened the high tone he had hitherto taken; and he began to view, in a more proper light, the sufferings

He offers to marry her.

<sup>k</sup> Hist. Calam.

<sup>l</sup> Ibid.

BOOK II. of Fulbert, and his own misconduct towards him. "I felt, indeed, for his situation, says he, and my shameful abuse of his confidence struck me on the heart." In these sentiments he waited on him; he asked his forgiveness; and he offered any reparation, which he would please to call for.—The old man listened, but his heart had been too much hardened by ill-usage to relent so soon. Abeillard proceeded: "And can you, indeed, be surprised at what has happened, when you reflect on the charms of Heloisa? I am a man, Sir; and he that will cast his eyes over the annals of mortality will find, that the greatest sages of ancient times were made but the sport of women. He only will not plead for me, who knows not the power of love."—The eyes of Fulbert grew fuller.—"I will marry Heloisa," said Abeillard, if that will give you satisfaction; but it must be on condition, that you divulge it not. My honour, my situation in the world exact this from me."—The proposal was unexpected, and a beam of joy seemed to spread over the old man's countenance. He was silent for a moment; then he looked Abeillard in the face, to see if his words were painted there; then he took hold of his hand; an action, which, at once said that he forgave him, and that he should have Heloisa<sup>m</sup>.

The friends, who were present, witnessed what had passed, and after mutual embraces, they parted.—The whole transaction did honour to Fulbert; but Abeillard closes his narration with a shameless reflection: "He appeared, says he, thus solemnly to sign a reconciliation, that he might undo me the more easily."

<sup>m</sup> Hist. Calam.

Seriously



Seriously resolved to execute his engagement, Abeillard, without delay, set off for Britany. Heloisa was not apprised of his coming: but he found her cheerfully occupied in the duties of her new state.—I am come, said he, (after the first salutations were over, and he had kissed his child, whom Heloisa, with the countenance of an angel, presented to him,) I am come to take you back to Paris, and to marry you.—Heloisa laughed, for she imagined, that he only spoke from gaiety, which was an usual thing with him.—I am serious, continued he: I have seen your uncle; he is reconciled to me, and I have promised to marry you.—If you be serious, replied Heloisa, it becomes me likewise to be so; and I tell you seriously, that I can never consent to be your wife.—The firm tone, in which the last words were spoken, struck Abeillard with surprise.—Your assertion, said he, is peremptory; but I must hear your reasons.—You shall, said she; and then proceeded.

“ If you imagine this step will so far satisfy my uncle,  
 “ as to appease his anger, Abeillard, you are deceived. I  
 “ know him well, and he is implacable.—If to save my ho-  
 “ nour be your object; most evidently you mistake the  
 “ means. Is it by disgracing you that I must be exalted?  
 “ What reproaches should I merit from the world, from the  
 “ church, from the schools of philosophy, were I to draw from  
 “ them their brightest star: and shall a woman dare to take to  
 “ herself that man, whom nature meant to be the ornament  
 “ and the benefactor of the human race? No, Abeillard, I am  
 “ not yet so shameless.—Then reflect on the state of matri-  
 “ mony itself: with its littlenesses and its cares, how incon-

<sup>n</sup> Hist. Calam.

L 2

“ fistent

## BOOK II.

“ fistent is it with the dignity of a wife man! St. Paul ear-  
 “ nestly diffuades from it; so do the saints; so do the phi-  
 “ losophers of ancient and modern times. Think on their  
 “ admonitions, and imitate their example.—I will suppose  
 “ you engaged in this honourable wedlock. What an envi-  
 “ able association; the philosopher and chamber-mâids,  
 “ writing desks and cradles, books and distaffs, pens and  
 “ spindles! Intent on speculation, when the truths of na-  
 “ ture and religion are breaking on your eye; will you bear  
 “ the sudden cry of children, the lullaby of nurses, or the  
 “ turbulent bustling of disorderly servants? I speak not of  
 “ your delicacy which, at every turn, must be disagreeably  
 “ offended. In the houses of the rich these inconveniences,  
 “ I own, can be avoided: with you and me, Abeillard, it  
 “ must be otherwise.—In the serious pursuits of wisdom, I  
 “ am well aware, there is no time to lose; worldly occu-  
 “ pations are inconsistent with the state. Is philosophy only  
 “ to have your vacant hours? Believe me, as well totally  
 “ withdraw from literature, as attempt to proceed in the  
 “ midst of avocations. Science admits no participation with  
 “ the cares of life. View the sages of the heathen world,  
 “ view the philosophising sects among the Jews, and among  
 “ us view the real monks of the present day. It was in re-  
 “ tirement, in a total seclusion from noisy solitudes, that  
 “ these men pretended to give ear to the inspiring voice of  
 “ wisdom.—May I speak of sobriety and continence, Abeil-  
 “ lard? But it does not become me to instruct you. I know,  
 “ however, how the sages, of whom I speak, did live.—You  
 “ moreover are a churchman, bound to severer duties. Is  
 “ it in wedlock you mean to practise them? Will you rise  
 “ from

“ from my fide to fing the holy praifes of the Lord?—The  
 “ prerogative of the church may perhaps weigh lightly with  
 “ you ; fupport then the character of a philofopher : if you  
 “ have no refpect for holy things ; let common decency  
 “ check the intemperance of your defigns.—Socrates, my  
 “ Abeillard, was a married man ; and the example of his  
 “ life has been fet up as a beacon, to warn his followers  
 “ from the fatal rock. The feats of Xantippe are upon  
 “ faithful record.—The hidden feelings of my foul fhall  
 “ be open to you. Abeillard, it is in you only that all my  
 “ wifhes centre. I look for no wealth, no alliances, no pro-  
 “ vifion. I have no pleasures to gratify ; no will to ferve  
 “ but your’s. In the name of wife there may be fomewhat  
 “ more holy, fomewhat more impofing : but I vow to hea-  
 “ ven, fhould Auguftus, mafter of the world, offer me his  
 “ hand in marriage, and fecure to me the uninterrupted  
 “ controul of the univerfe, I would deem it more honour-  
 “ able to be called the *miftrefs* of Abeillard, than the *wife* of  
 “ Cæfar.”

During this addrefs, Abeillard was filent ; but a conflict of paffions, varying his countenance, marked their ftrong emotions. Heloifa fixed her eyes on his, and waited his reply. A pause of fome moments enfued.—My honour is pledged to your uncle, faid he at laft, and it muft be done.—If it muft, replied Heloifa with a figh that fpoke the reluctance of her foul, it muft : “ But God grant, that the  
 “ confequences of this fatal ftep be not as painful, as the  
 “ joys, which preceded it, have been great P !”

• Ep. Helois. 1<sup>a</sup>.

P Hift. Calam.

Uttering

## BOOK II.

Uttering these words, her eyes were raised towards heaven; and from the solemn tone, with which they were delivered, it seemed, says Abeillard, as if her mind presaged some disastrous event.

In this discourse, which I have abridged, (indeed it is abridged in the original itself,) the reader will discover the strong sense of Heloisa, together with her sensibility and her peculiar turn of character. Unprepared for the topic, she discusses it with infinite art, and is ready with authorities, drawn from sacred and profane history, to enforce her reasoning.—In the excess of her love for Abeillard must be sought for an excuse, if any can be found, to justify some ideas, which, conformably with modern habits, will be deemed licentious. His honour which she saw, would suffer, and his promotion in the church, which matrimony would impede, pressed on her mind with so mighty a weight, that whatever personal considerations could throw into the opposite scale, appeared to her eyes lighter than the lightest feather.—Abeillard, as I have elsewhere noticed, though a canon in the cathedral church of Paris, was not in holy orders, and consequently was yet free to marry; but, by the discipline of the age, he must then have surrendered his living, and with it all other prospects of church-preferment.—<sup>r</sup> She complains that, in his account of this interview, he had omitted to record the greater part of the motives, by which she was “induced to prefer love to matrimony, and liberty to chains.” She herself, however, fails not to supply the deficiency. The more she sacrificed herself and her reputation, the stronger pretension she should

<sup>r</sup> Ep. Hel. 1<sup>2</sup>.

should have, she thought, to his regard; and in a voluntary attachment she saw a stronger tie of love, than in the nuptial band.—The notions of the age were not, it is well known, so subservient to legal rites, as ours are; indeed, they existed not either so numerous or so obligatory; but I am far from pretending that, at any time perhaps, the romantic spirit of Heloisa could have been confined to what, she esteemed, the vulgar rules of conduct. I hold her not up as an example to call imitation, but I view her as a phenomenon, which has my admiration and my wonder. The comet, which wildly roves through the regions of space, is an object of more eager contemplation, than inferior bodies which, tied in their spheres, never swerve from the fixed line of gravitation.

All things being settled for their departure, and having committed the little boy to the care of his aunt Dionysia, the lovers left Britany. Heloisa had felt the pang of separation, in giving the last kiss to her child; and her prophetic mind viewed, in every step they took, a nearer approach to misery. But she knew when it was her duty to submit; and having once fully expressed her sentiments, she would no more give pain to Abeillard by the continuance of a wayward opposition.—They arrived at Paris, as they had left it, in the silence of the night; for, that the prying eye of curiosity might not watch their actions, it was proper her return should be kept as secret as possible. Heloisa, with a heavy heart, went straight to her uncle's house; he to his own apartments, and the next day, as usual, appeared in the schools<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>f</sup> Hist. Calam..

## BOOK II.

They are  
married.

In the course of a few days, the time was fixed for their marriage. Fulbert, whom experience had rendered suspicious, was not willing to risk any new adventures by unnecessary delays. It was proposed that the ceremony should be performed privately, in a neighbouring church, before break of day. To this the old man assented. A few friends to each party were asked to be present. The morning came, and the fatal knot was tied<sup>t</sup>. They then separated, each one retiring to his respective home; nor did it seem, that the least suspicion had been raised. Abeillard made no change in his usual form of life; he seldom visited Heloisa, and never but in some disguise, or in the most secret manner.

When the disgrace, which had befallen the canon's family, began publicly to be talked of; and it was known, or at least, conjectured, that a private marriage had taken place: officious friends soon interfered, who represented to the old man that, to retrieve the honour of his niece, and to save that of himself and his house, it was absolutely necessary it should be made public. Fulbert declared the promise he had made to Abeillard. Such a promise, said they, is futile: to make some reparation for the injury he had done her and her family, he marries Heloisa; and this marriage must be kept secret!—Fulbert was roused by the argument; the recollection of past injuries struck forcibly on his heart, and he told his friends, that their advice should be followed. His servants received orders to divulge the marriage: he himself declared it in all companies; and his friends were as industrious to propagate the tale<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>t</sup> Hist. Calam.

<sup>v</sup> Ibid.

The rapid flight of rumour has been celebrated by poets, and facts, to the experience almost of every man, have proved, that there is no exaggeration in their descriptions. The news of the marriage was, in an instant, carried into every house in Paris. Much was said of the good Fortune, which attended Heloisa; while some spoke of her high deserts, and others, with a malignant significancy, hinted at the circumstance, which had procured her the honour of the nuptial wreath<sup>u</sup>.—The fate of the philosopher was not so gently treated: they lamented his loss of honour, and the surrender of dignities and preferment, which must necessarily ensue. When the crozier and glittering mitre courted his acceptance, he had laid his hand on the distaff, they observed.

Heloisa appeared in public: she was noticed with unusual curiosity; her friends crowded round her to compliment her, on her new dignity; and general gratulation sounded in her ears. She was thunderstruck, but not disconcerted. The forebodings of her mind had told her to be prepared for the event. With a composed countenance, therefore, she expressed her utter ignorance of what was meant; laughed at the absurd story, when it was more distinctly repeated to her; and when circumstances were urged to give it additional force, with the most solemn asseverations she declared, that it was an impudent falsehood<sup>w</sup>.—The reader who has considered the unexampled sensibility, which Heloisa has manifested for the honour of her husband, will not be surprised at this new trait of her disinterested magnanimity. In the school of morality a severer judgment will be passed.

<sup>u</sup> Vie d'Abeil. p. 88.

<sup>w</sup> Hist. Cal.

## BOOK II.

The firm but naïf manner, in which Heloïsa denied her marriage, convinced many that Fulbert, from views known to himself, had imposed a false report on the public. There could be no motive, they thought, to induce his niece to deny a fact, which, if true, would bring honour and happiness with it.—Besides, when they reflected, how brilliant was the prospect which lay open to Abeillard, of rising to the first dignities in the church, it did not seem probable, he would make a sacrifice of the whole to the charms of Heloïsa. When the beauties of Paris laid their garlands at his feet, would he take up the chains of wedlock, exposing himself to the ridicule of the world, and to the anxious cares of life?—Abeillard, by his behaviour, still convinced them more, that he was not a married man. He had resumed, with fresh ardour, his wonted course of studies; he delivered his lectures with uncommon perspicuity and powers; he opened new and unexplored questions for further discussion; and his hearers, as they were more than ever captivated by his eloquence, rejoiced in the return of his former vigour, and that philosophy had at last triumphed over the allurements of a woman\*.

Fulbert, perceiving that his endeavours to divulge the marriage, were so artfully counteracted by his niece, as to be almost wholly frustrated, was extremely irritated. He charged her with ingratitude, with insensibility to her own honour and to that of her family, and with a depravity of humour, which, in spite of the strongest motives, induced her to prefer falsehood to truth.—Heloïsa justified her conduct with great firmness; she reminded her uncle of the solemn

\* Vie d'Abeil.



solemn promise he had made to Abeillard not to publish the marriage; and she urged, with the most emphatic eloquence, the reputation of her husband, as a motive which, in her mind, must outway every other consideration. "Accuse me not, said she, of ingratitude: I feel all the duties which bind me to you; but Abeillard is my husband."—The argument was not of a nature to impress the callous heart of age; the honour of family was uppermost, and the wound he had received was not yet healed<sup>1</sup>.

Heloisa was silent: why remonstrate with a man, it was not possible to convince? But her life became daily more irksome. Fulbert persisted to reproach her, and to reproaches added ill-usage. All this she bore with a becoming resolution: but suspecting this persecution might at last end in what she dreaded most, the positive exclusion of Abeillard from her company, she acquainted him of her situation, and of the fears which came nearest to her heart. Instantly he resolved to remove her from her uncle's house<sup>2</sup>.

Argenteuil, situated in the neighbourhood of Paris, was then an abbey of Benedictine nuns. Here Heloisa had been educated, and here she had imbibed all those elements of learning, which, at this time, made her the first literary character in the female world. Abeillard judged properly, that this would be the best retirement for his wife: it would rescue her from the hands of Fulbert; it would afford her a pleasing society; and it might, possibly, more than any thing contribute to silence the report of their marriage.—He informed the abbess of his intention, and requested she would have a nun's habit in readiness, as it was his wish,

He conveys  
her to Argen-  
teuil.

<sup>1</sup> Hist Calam.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

BOOK II. that Heloisa should appear in the common dress of the convent. Without difficulty his petition was granted: the holy sisterhood would be charmed, once more to see within the walls of Argenteuil, the lovely pensioner, who had done so much honour to their house: her engaging manners were yet warm on their recollection.—Abeillard therefore, again protected by the shades of night, removed his dear treasure, and consigned it safely to the cloister of Argenteuil<sup>a</sup>.

Some weeks, it appears, had elapsed, before Fulbert could discover how his niece had been disposed of. Information, at last, was brought him, where she was; that she had been conveyed away by Abeillard; and that, by his command, she had put on the habit of a nun. Appearances were strong, and on them the old man rested his conjectures.—Was a convent, thought he, the only place to which he could have taken his wife, had he been determined to remove her? or if a convent pleased him best, why was the dress also of a nun to be chosen? She might have remained there in the common habit of the world.—The suggestions of his friends served to corroborate his suspicions. They were unanimously of opinion that, Abeillard, finding it impossible to keep his marriage secret, had resolved at once to rid himself of the incumbrance, and that his design was to devote to God what he could not retain, consistently with his reputation and future prospects. To attempt forcibly to drag Heloisa from the cloister, would be, they knew, an act of sacrilege; the laws, they knew, would give them no redress; other means of vengeance were therefore to be projected.

<sup>a</sup> Hist. Calam.

Abeillard,

Abeillard, though conscious of the uprightness of his designs, viewed, with pain, the maze of difficulties, in which he was involved: often did he wish that he had followed the advice of Heloisa; but now it was too late. With a trembling eye he looked forward to futurity, but there no gleam was discoverable, which might seem to portend a fortunate issue to his troubles.—Sometimes he visited Heloisa at her convent, but always in the greatest privacy<sup>b</sup>.—I will not pretend that he never indulged the thought that, tired perhaps by anxiety, to which there was no end, or from the love she bore him, Heloisa might propose, as the only way to end all troubles, to consecrate herself to religion.—He would never compel her to so severe a choice; but should she herself first suggest it, it would not become him to oppose her holy purpose. Liberty and independence would be again in his possession; and he might reach from fortune's wheel to the proudest objects of his ambition. The sight of his fair nun would, I know, dispel this airy castle; but when the gay hour was over, and reflection returned, his imagination would rebuild it perhaps in gaudier colours.

Fulbert, in the mean while, often met his friends. His cheek was wan with anger, and a fullen melancholy sat upon his brow. Various schemes of vengeance were proposed: some they rejected as impracticable, some as too dangerous, and others as inadequate to the insulting crime of their enemy. It was at last hinted, that there was a punishment, which would fully satisfy every desire that revenge itself could harbour; which would carry pain and infamy along with it; which would make the sufferer an object of general

Fulbert's revenge.

<sup>b</sup> Ep. Abeil. 3<sup>a</sup>.

BOOK II. general ridicule; and which would most effectually check his career towards further dignities and church-preferments. The idea was instantly adopted.

But even this project, when coolly considered, might be attended with some danger, and with many difficulties. Abeillard had innumerable friends, and his house was ever under the guard of servants. The conspirators however were not of a humour to be intimidated from their purpose by any ordinary concurrence of obstacles. It was agreed that an attempt should be made to corrupt one of his servants: this effected, what else could frustrate their scheme? The servant, by a sum of money, was easily seduced, and the plan of operation was determined<sup>c</sup>.

In the silence of the next night the conspirators assemble; they are five in number; they proceed to the house of Abeillard; the door is opened by the servant; he conducts them to the apartment of his master; Abeillard is in a profound sleep; they seize the unfortunate man; all resistance is vain—and the horrid deed is perpetrated<sup>d</sup>.

While the business, I have described, engaged all the attention of the Parisians, nothing very interesting occurred in the affairs of Europe. To the tumultuary scenes which closed the century, had succeeded a solemn pause. It was an effect in the common order of things. The crusaders were returned; and the story of their adventures would supply ample matter for general entertainment. They themselves would be disposed to rest from their labours, to enjoy the admiration of their fellow citizens, and having expiated their former crimes, to open a new career of extravagance

<sup>c</sup> Hist. Calam.

<sup>d</sup> Ibid.

extravagance and vice. But the calm, as the minds of men were then circumstanced, could not long continue. BOOK II.

Pascal the second was pope of Rome. He was a man of virtue and abilities, and Gregory the seventh had been his friend. The grand scheme of ecclesiastical monarchy, which Gregory and his immediate successor Urban had formed, and begun to realife, was pursued by Pascal. With their schemes, he also engaged in their quarrels. Henry, the German emperor, whom the thunders of the vatican had not subdued, was still living, nor was he disposed to recede from his pretensions. Again he was excommunicated, again the princes of Christendom were called upon to crush the proud enemy of the church, and his son Henry was instigated to lay his hand on his father's crown. The blow proved fatal. Unable to oppose the powerful confederacy Henry resigned the empire to his son: he was then thrown into prison, but escaping, he assembled a small army, which was defeated. The old man was reduced to extreme distress; without a friend, he wandered from place to place, and fearing to perish by hunger, he entreated the bishop of Spire to grant him a lay-prebend in his church. "I have studied, said he, and have learned to sing, and therefore may be of some service to you." His request was denied. He did not long survive this event. For fifty years his head had worn the diadem.

Pascal II.  
pope of  
Rome.

Though his successor Henry the fifth owed his crown, in a great measure, to the intrigues of Rome; yet was he not for this more subservient to her mandates. He supported the same quarrel about the right of investitures, made Pascal prisoner,

• Fleury vol. xiv. Nat. Alex. sæc. xii.

## BOOK II.

prisoner, and extorted from him a concession of the great point, which had been so long in litigation. The pusillanimous conduct of the pontiff raised a general murmur: he called a council at Rome, to justify his proceedings, and to exculpate himself from the crime of heresy, with which his adversaries had charged him. But the council proceeded to censure what he had done, and they solemnly annulled the writing, whereby he had granted the right of investiture to Henry. Pascal confessed his fault; though what he had done, he said, was done by compulsion, to rescue himself and his people from the ruin which threatened them. He then submitted himself to the arbitration of the synod, offering to resign the tiara, which he was no longer worthy to wear. His demission was not accepted<sup>f</sup>.

An *investiture*, concerning which so much is said in the histories of these times, is a solemn act, by which the possession of lands and honours, belonging to episcopal sees, was conferred on the persons, who were canonically chosen to fill them. Temporal sovereigns pretended to the right of investiture. It was from them that the church derived her riches, and among her extensive possessions were many feudatory tenures, which naturally remained liable to the common conditions of fiefs. These were called *regalia*. It was asserted that, agreeably to general maxims, no one should enter on the possession of such lands or honours, without the consent of the prince.—After due homage had been made, and an oath of allegiance taken, he granted this possession by putting an instrument, such as the pastoral staff, or the sceptre, into the hand of the candidate. In all this there seemed

<sup>f</sup> Fleury vol. xiv. Nat. Alex. sæc. xii.

seemed to be no infringement of ecclesiastical privileges, as it was not pretended that the prince could grant spiritual or canonical jurisdiction. This was left to the church. However, as the crozier and ring, which the prince used, on these occasions, were thought to signify ecclesiastical power, it was maintained that the ceremony was an usurpation of sacred things, which belonged not to him<sup>s</sup>.—It must, indeed, be owned, that great abuses were the consequence of these lay-investitures. Princes interfered in the elections of bishops, so far as to destroy their freedom; they kept the sees vacant, under pretence, that persons were chosen, who were not agreeable to them; they appointed their favourites, men too often unworthy of the important charge, to fill them, and sometimes, by a simoniacal disposal, they gave them to those who offered most. Against this undue stretch of power, the worthy pastors of the church opposed all their zeal; and had this solely been the contest between them and princes, the approbation of all thinking christians would have gone with the former.

Unfortunately both parties were jealous of each other, and this jealousy blinded their judgments. They would not distinguish between things that, in themselves, were totally disparate. The temporal power apprehended, that it was the wish of the churchmen absolutely to withdraw themselves and their possessions from all earthly controul: for which apprehension, clearly, there were too strong grounds: while, on their side, the church-rulers were not less fearful, that the prince aimed to arrogate the whole of their concerns to himself, to enslave their ministers, to usurp

<sup>s</sup> Nat. Alex: *ibid*.

BOOK II. their possessions, and to controul their elections. Nor was this dread less founded than the other.

In no part of Christendom, was this controversy agitated with greater heat, than in England. It was the dispute, which so long divided Henry the first and his archbishop Anselm. This worthy and learned prelate had adopted the new doctrines of the times, in which he was strenuously supported by Pascal. Henry pretended to the use of no power that had not been exercised by all his predecessors<sup>b</sup>: but this power had been abused. The court of Rome not satisfied with attacking the abuse, aimed at the subversion of the principle. They would not allow that the investiture of church honours should be given by a lay hand, whatever declarations might be made, that nothing spiritual was intended.

When the characters of these three great men, Henry, Pascal, and Anselm, are considered, it is matter of surprise that their differences could ever be terminated. The inflexibility of Henry was remarkable, and he had with him the general suffrages of his nobles and bishops: besides, the rights he supported, were the ancient rights of his crown. Pascal and Anselm were not made of softer materials, and it seemed to them, they were defending the sacred and unalienable privileges of God and his church.—On both sides, I discover the most upright motives, grounded on principles of equity and conscience.—Pascal at length gave way; though concessions were also made by the adverse party. It was agreed, that the king, in future, should grant investitures, but without delivering the ring or crozier;

<sup>b</sup> Nat. Alex. *ibid*.



crofier; for on these implements, in fact, hinged the grand difficulty. Pascal, in a letter to the archbishop, thus expresses himself. “ It is true, I am disposed to make concessions to the king, that he may know the sincerity of my heart. If you see your neighbour fallen to the ground, can it be said you are in earnest to relieve him, unless while you stretch out your hand, you also bend your body towards him? To give effectual assistance we must stoop; nor is the attitude disgraceful<sup>1</sup>.” They are the sentiments of a great mind. BOOK II.

Thus was the power of the church every day growing to an immense magnitude: it was the soul which gave animation to the political designs of Europe.—From this period we may trace its progress, its alternate ebbs and flows, as circumstances directed. When it fell into the hands of able and enterprising men, no force was strong enough to resist it; because, on these occasions, besides its own weight, it had the support of those princes, whose interest it was to give it efficacy. In the hands of weak or ignorant rulers, its influence fell, in a similar proportion.—Much evil, I am ready to allow, often proceeded from this great stretch of power; but also, very often, did it produce great good. Could they both be weighed in an equal balance, I fear not to declare, that the good would often preponderate. The popes, I know, were often men of ambition, and in their designs often not actuated by the true principles of religion; but also, far the greatest part of them were conspicuous for their abilities and high moral virtues: they were the first men of the age. In such hands place an unlimited power,

<sup>1</sup> Nat. Alex. *ibid.* Fleury vol. xiv.

BOOK II. and the consequences must prove favourable to the general interests of human kind. Every motive, which has influence on man, was in play to urge them to virtuous and laudable undertakings. Even their own honour was concerned: for a profligate pontiff was in no estimation: and wherein could their ambitious feel a greater indulgence, than in schemes which tended to the suppression of vice and the spread of virtue? Here also success contributed to strengthen the power which produced it. In the twelfth century, take from Rome the vast influence of the tiara, and the condition of Europe, I think, will appear to be greatly more deplorable than it was. It was the great engine which, in the ordinary course of providence, was deemed necessary to conduct the business of the christian world. As circumstances altered, it ceased to be so, and it gradually dwindled down to what, at this day, it is. In some future revolution of things, Rome may again rise to its former altitude, and be once more the controuling power of Europe.

France and  
England.

In France, Philip the first was dead, and his son, Lewis the sixth, had succeeded to the throne. Scenes of internal war and discord still continued. Circumscribed, indeed, as the royal domain then was, they were unavoidable. The proud vassals, some of them able to bring more men into the field, than their prince, little regarded his authority, when their testy humour was irritated. But after the conquest of England by a Norman prince, the French king was every day exposed to more serious attacks. The Duke of Normandy was his vassal, but also he was king of England, and as such independent on him. Mutual jealousy and reasons of state could not long want subjects of contention; besides,  
the

the discontented men of both kingdoms were ever prepared to uncover the embers, and to blow the smallest spark into a flame<sup>k</sup>. BOOK II.

The vanity of an Englishman might be flattered in the possession of a territory, which led him almost to the gates of Paris; but when the evils are viewed, which, from this circumstance, so long desolated both countries, surely it must be deemed a happy event, that we no longer possess a single acre of land upon that hostile shore.

I mentioned the dispute about investitures, which was a very principal concern, at this time, in the affairs of England. What else engaged the monarch's attention was, the strengthening of his kingdom at home, and the establishment of his power in Normandy. As Robert, his elder brother, the hero who had done wonders before the walls of Jerusalem, was rightful heir to both countries, it required no small address to retain the possession of his usurped dominions. Robert, besides, was the courtier's, the soldier's, and the churchman's friend. But the good fortune of the English monarch prevailed; for Henry was the wisest man, as stout a warrior, and the greatest politician of the age, in which he lived.—The melancholy story of the lives of Robert and his son William, to which may be added that of Edgar Atheling, the friend of Robert and his partner in affliction, is well known to the English reader.

In looking round for other objects of selection, I find little else in the political state of Europe. But the church is ever a fertile repository: here the historian, whatever be his character, philosophical or religious, can never want materials.

*Enthusiasm,*

<sup>k</sup> Hume, Daniel.

## BOOK II.

Religious orders.

*Enthusiasm*, as the reader has already seen, was a great feature in the character of the times; for mankind was then ignorant and unoccupied. In this state the mind falls back on itself, and finding nothing there which may engage its attention, it becomes always uneasy, and sometimes even weary of existence. External impressions are then most forcible, because the thoughts are unengaged; and they are most pleasing, because they dissipate the torpid apathy, from which proceeds the misery just mentioned. But only strong impressions can generate this effect. Human nature, in a state of incultivation, knows nothing of the finer feelings; the fibres, on the motion of which these depend, have never learned to play. Thus, in savage life, only war and the dangerous sports of the field are pursued with ardour.—The observation applies to the twelfth century. The trumpet sounded to arms, and we saw whole provinces at once in motion; at other times, quarrels, invasions, skirmishes at home, could afford them an agreeable relaxation.

But as, in different men, different are the characters, owing to difference of organization, or climate, or education, so would not all be equally affected by the same agent. The voice or example of a man, deemed to be inspired from heaven; or the awful denunciations of God against finners; or the horror itself, which certain minds, cast in a better mold, are apt to feel at the view of enormous crimes: these impressions, respectively, would produce their effects; and it appears that multitudes, at this time, were disposed to receive them. Whenever it happened, a proportionate enthusiasm would be raised on the mind; and this it was that, in a philosophical light at least, called so many into the

the cloisters, which were now opened in various parts of the Western world. BOOK II.

It is falsely imagined, that the monastic life was then a state of indolence or inaction, and consequently not calculated to generate the pleasing sensations, I described. In itself, abstractedly considered, it was not full of energy; but I have observed, that it often opened the paths to honour and preferment. Ambition would then be roused, and look ardently towards the object of its wishes; whilst the milder emotions, which religion and the exercise of the severer virtues, would excite in others, could not fail to produce the happiest effects.—The founders of these religious institutes, if we view them with a candid eye, will be found to have been men of exalted virtue: they seemed to be a new class of mortals, and to breathe from inspiration; and it was thought, sometimes, perhaps, from an irritated imagination which blinded the judgment, or from ignorance of the powers of nature, or really because heaven, in compassion to a wicked generation, judged it expedient to speak to them in wonders; that they possessed the marvellous gift of working miracles. It may easily be conjectured, how powerful would be the effect of such considerations. Who would not wish to be the disciples of these favoured sons of heaven? By some it would be expected that a portion, perhaps, of the same spirit would descend upon them also, that they should be great, admired by men, and beloved of God; while others, more rationally disposed, in a nearer approach to their persons, would admire their virtues, and strive to imitate their example.

The

## BOOK II.

The monastic or eremetical life was of very ancient date. It did not seem to men, endowed with warm imaginations, that our Saviour and his disciples had sufficiently departed from the common maxims and ways of society. So at least, in these degenerate days, we are sometimes disposed to think of them. They fancied there were paths, which would lead them nearer to the high perfection of angels; and these paths they resolved to tread. This it was that, in the first ages, filled the deserts of the East. No one would contest their habitations with them; and they earned their bread in the sweat of their brows, accompanying their labours with continual prayer. The designs of such men must have been meritorious, and in their lives there was perfection; but they must not be judged by any common rule. Man is a social being, and there are duties, by which, in the ordinary course of providence, we seem to be bound to one another. The fact appears almost incredible; but we are told that, at the end of the fourth century, the deserts alone of Egypt contained nearly eighty thousand hermits<sup>1</sup>. The motives which led them thither were, I am ready to believe, founded on misconceptions of duty; but the indulgence of passion could possibly have had no influence. When we seek gratification, it will hardly be among burning sands and the howlings of wild beasts.

This extraordinary love of solitude gradually spread from the East into the Western continent. But as all passions partake, more or less, of the nature of the soil or climate, where they arise, or into which they are transplanted, the European constitution was found inadequate to the lofty flights

<sup>1</sup> Fleury disc. 8.

flights of the Egyptian and Asiatic hermits.—In 530 St. Bennet instituted his order in Italy, the primitive forms of which have no pretensions to the austere discipline, that distinguished the monks, I have mentioned. In the lapse, however, of a few centuries, even the disciples of Bennet fell from the perfection of their institute. Such is the nature of all human establishments: and towards the beginning of the tenth century, by the incursions of barbarous nations and the general hostilities of the times, which ruined monasteries and overturned churches, the monastic rule was nearly extinguished in the Western church<sup>m</sup>.

Now it was, that the famous institute of Clugny, in France, rose from the ashes of the Benedictin rule. A succession of abbots, famed for sanctity and science, gave celebrity to the new observance. Its houses multiplied over the continent of Europe: men of the highest rank and of the most brilliant talents, were proud to be seen in the dress of Clugny; and it became the great seminary, from which Rome drew its most eminent pontiffs, and the church its worthiest ministers. But even the monks of Clugny were men: riches flowed into their monasteries, and the evils, consequent on riches, came along with them. In two hundred years from its foundation, Clugny sank into obscurity. Peter the venerable, who died in 1156, was the last abbot, whom history records with praises.

At this time also, St Bruno instituted his Carthusians. He was a man of letters, and of great repute in the churches of France. Disgusted of the world, and naturally of a gloomy disposition, he associated to himself a few compa-

The Char-  
treuse.

<sup>m</sup> Fleury disc. 8.

## BOOK II.

nions, and with these retired to the dreadful solitudes in the neighbourhood of Grenoble. The man who has seen this sequestered region, even in its more hospitable state, may form some conception of the mind of Bruno. The horrors of the place were congenial with his soul: here, he thought, the divinity loved to dwell, and that, in the howlings of the wilderiness, he should more distinctly hear his voice. To the austerities, with which nature clothed every object round him, he added whatever imagination could suggest, painful, macerating, and oppressive, in silence, abstemiousness, and penury. The inhabitants of the Chartreuse, so was their dwelling called, forbade themselves the poor comforts of their own society; and the few wanderers, whom curiosity might lead to them, were refused admission to their huts. Women were not allowed to put a foot upon the ground, which the pious solitaries called their inclosure; and Hugo, bishop of Grenoble, to whom the wilderiness belonged, forbade the fisherman to approach their brooks, and the huntsman to disturb their silence with his horn: the animals of the forest might not browse on their herbage. Every cheering object was to be removed from this scene of prayer and penitence<sup>n</sup>.—Bruno died in 1101.

Though this imperfect sketch of the Carthusian institute may not seem inviting, yet so strong is the sympathy between certain minds and every thing which should seem horrible in nature and religion, that, in a short time, not only the Chartreuse was crowded with inhabitants, but even the order quickly branched out into all the kingdoms of Europe. The situations of their convents could not resemble the  
Grenoble

<sup>n</sup> Fleury vol. xiii.



Grenoble wilderness, but the discipline and internal œconomy were every where alike. For seven hundred years has this order now continued, and what is extraordinary, it has departed less from its primitive austerity, than any other monastic institute in the christian church.

It is not the philosopher or the politician, who will be called upon to give his sanction to such extraordinary establishments: but to the infinite variety of character, which marks the human race, it seems, all possible modes of life should be permitted, whereby content and happiness can be procured. Man is a free agent, and may chuse for himself: there is tyranny in the contrary doctrine.

At this period, while Bruno and his disciples, in the horrid retirement of Dauphiné declared war against themselves and the allurements of the world, Robert d'Arbriffelles, in the milder climate of Touraine, supported the same conflict, but in circumstances still more extraordinary. He also was a man of letters, and had rendered himself serviceable in the church. He prayed much, fasted much, watched much, and over his skin he wore a coat of mail. His zeal against the fashionable vices of the age was flagrant, simony, ecclesiastical concubinage, and every species of oppression on the poor and on the church. Robert had enemies; he therefore quitted the world, and withdrew to the woods. Fontevraud.

Pope Urban being at Angers, the capital of Anjou, in 1096, was told of the pious solitary, and of his abilities: he wished to hear him preach. Robert attended, and acquitted himself so well before a numerous assembly of people, that the pontiff, on the spot, granted him an unlimited commission to preach, wheresoever fancy might lead him. Arbriffelles's

BOOK II. felles's fancy was not easily confined: he ranged into the neighbouring provinces; multitudes crowded to hear him, and his success was wonderful. For ten years he led this unsettled life.

Robert was, at last, made sensible, that great abuses were the consequence of this promiscuous assemblage of men and women. Having no fixed habitation, they wandered with their master, and where night found them, there they reposed. Robert was of a more social turn than the holy solitary of Grenoble: he held out his hand to the most profligate finners, and women, of all descriptions, were sure to find an asylum near him. His friends expostulated very severely with him; they charged him with too easy a familiarity; they condemned his unsettled way of life; and they ridiculed his long beard, his naked feet, and his grotesque apparel. Robert looked round for an habitation, and he found one.

It was a wilderness, called Fontevraud, on the confines of Poitou. Inhabited by wild beasts, and in that state of incultivation, which nature, in her luxuriant fancies, loves to form, it was of no value to its proprietors. They gave it to Robert; and here he settled his numerous family. To protect themselves from the inclemencies of the air, they built huts. Robert then separated the men from the women. To the men he prescribed hard labour, and, at stated times, called them to sing psalms or to pray: the women he confined to their cabins, and he turned the key upon them. For some time, they lived in great indigence, supported only by the wild roots of the wilderness, and the water of the brook, or by the uncertain contributions of the neighbourhood.

bourhood. The prospect soon cleared: very considerable donations in land were made to them; and the desert of Fontevraud began to smile. BOOK II.

In 1116, ten years after its foundation, Fontevraud was in a flourishing state. Kings and the nobles of the land had heaped their riches round it. The number of religious of both sexes, exceeded three thousand.—It was a whimsical idea of their founder to subject the men to the women. He had read in the gospels, that John, the beloved disciple of his master, had been ordered by him to adopt the virgin Mary for his mother. This was an example to be followed: the holy women of Fontevraud were to have the privilege of mothers; and it should be the duty of their sons to serve them, and to obey them. Robert drawing near to his end, assembled the male part of his community, and said: “ My children, is it your intention to persevere in the holy resolution you have made, and to obey the handmaids of our Lord, whom I have ordained to govern all the houses of my order?” They answered, unanimously, that such was their intention. He then chose for their superior, Petronilla de Craon, a noble widow, and soon after expired<sup>o</sup>.

<sup>o</sup> Fleury vol. xiv. Nat. Alex. sæc. xii.

—END OF THE SECOND BOOK.



THE  
HISTORY  
OF THE LIVES OF  
ABEILLARD and HELOISA.

BOOK III.

*Distress of Abeillard—Heloisa hears the news—Hard fate of Fulbert.—Abeillard proposes to Heloisa to quit the world—She is professed a nun—Abeillard becomes a monk at St. Denys—He resumes his lectures—Is cited before the council of Soissons—Is confined at St. Medard—Returns to St. Denys—Escapes in the night.—Reflections.*

Anno, 1119.

UNCHEERING was the fun which rose to Abeillard. BOOK III.  
—His servants, wakened by the noise, and the cries of their master, had run in to his assistance, and procured him the help his melancholy situation called for. The neighbourhood was alarmed; but the assassins had escaped. He desired to be left alone.

Now

## BOOK III.

Distress of  
Abeillard.

Now it was, that a thousand distressing thoughts rushed into his mind.—He that had been the idol of admiration, was become an object of scorn and ridicule!—He should be pointed at in the streets; every tongue, and the eye of every beholder, would say; there goes Abeillard!—How would his enemies exult in his fall; and even from his friends, he could only look for pity! Was pity at last the enviable reward, that was to crown all his glory!—There was an end of literary fame; an end of philosophy; an end of every pursuit which was dear to his ambition.—Should he again dare to enter the schools—but the jeering looks of the young men would be an eternal bar to the attempt.—Yet how much, thought he, had he merited this humiliation: and how equitable were the judgments of heaven! He had basely betrayed the man, who had confided in him; and now treachery was returned from treachery<sup>a</sup>.—He paused; but no thought would arise, from which to draw the smallest gleam of comfort: nor does he say, in this tumultuary crowd of reflections, that his mind even once turned from itself to Heloisa.

The mournful soliloquy, however, was soon broken. Rumour had carried the tale from door to door; and it was hardly day, when his friends, anxious to know the truth, and to express their condolence, crowded to his house. “The whole city, says he, assembled round me: astonishment was marked on their countenances; tears fell from their eyes. But can I express, how much their lamentations irritated and disturbed me? The churchmen chiefly, and more than these my scholars, pained me with their  
“ sighs

<sup>a</sup> Hist. Calam.

“ sighs and wailings. It was their compassion which afflicted me, and not the smart of my wounds. I hung my head, and blushed. I had read in the book of Numbers, that such animals as myself were not to be received, even as victims, in the sacrifices of the Lord<sup>b</sup>.”

Vanity may be thought to have suggested the first part of this narration; but the story is told in terms equally pompous by a contemporary author<sup>c</sup>. In a letter of consolation to Abeillard, he says: “ You were retired to rest, and meant evil to no man; when the hand of villainy, armed with a murdering knife, prepared to spill your blood. The venerable metropolitan of Paris bewailed the fatal stroke; the college of prebends and of illustrious churchmen bewailed it; the city, deeming herself disgraced by the atrocious deed, joined in the doleful lamentation— So great, indeed, was the general grief, that you might be pleased rather with the cause which produced it. It is not in prosperity that we know our friends. Paris, which lamented your misfortune, has now told you, how much she loves her Abeillard.”

Heloisa, in the mean while, was at Argenteuil. In the society of her dear nuns, in literary pursuits, and in holy meditation, the hours flowed gently on. Abeillard did not often visit her; but lest fresh suspicions should be raised, she had herself advised the most circumspect caution. When he was with her, she enjoyed his company without danger of intrusion. Compared, therefore, with what she had suffered under her uncle's roof, the cloister of Argenteuil had a thousand pleasures. Imagination also helped to gild the

Heloisa hears  
the news.

<sup>b</sup> Hist. Calam.

<sup>c</sup> Fulco ep. ad Abeil.

BOOK III. scene: they looked forward to the day, when, possibly, some event, in the general revolution of things, might be propitious, and make their union happy.—Such was the situation of Heloisa.

But Abeillard, for some days, had not appeared; the time he had promised to return was passed; a vague rumour of something disastrous began to spread; and it was whispered that Abeillard had been attacked by ruffians. Nothing is so easily moved as the minds of lovers. Heloisa started at the sound; the forebodings, which troubled her, had not subsided: she knew the revengeful spirit of her uncle, and that he had been grievously irritated; and she knew the temper of the men, in whom he confided most. The report gradually gained strength; and Heloisa soon understood the extent of her misfortune<sup>d</sup>.—It might, at first, be indistinctly conveyed, but the delicacy of the age would be no bar to the most circumstantial detail of the tragical event.—Now it was necessary she should exert her heroism; should draw consolation from religion and philosophy; and should appear as great in affliction, as she had in love.—The selfish Abeillard is again silent on the subject, and no history is extant to record the behaviour of Heloisa on this sad occasion.

The ruffians, I have said, had escaped; but diligent search was made by the magistrates, and two of them were taken. One of these was the servant, who had betrayed his master. The punishment inflicted on them was agreeable to the notions of the age; they lost their eyes, and the *lex talionis*, (a law founded on the strictest principle of justice, and which might,

<sup>d</sup> Vie d'Abeil. p. 96.



might, with the greatest propriety, be revived in all countries,) completed the work<sup>c</sup>. BOOK III.

Nor were the bishop and his clergy less active in prosecuting Fulbert. He, as well as Abeillard, were members of the ecclesiastical body, and consequently, the cognizance of their cause appertained to them. Such was then the established discipline.—The unhappy Fulbert appeared before his judges: the crime, of which he was accused, seemed notorious; but, as he was not present at its perpetration, he was permitted to make his defence. What his defence was, is not related; only it is said, that he denied himself to be guilty. The circumstance of his absence, and the cruel provocation he had received, were maturely weighed; the milder spirit of the ecclesiastical court was permitted to operate; and a sentence was pronounced, severe indeed, but not bloody as that which fell on his accomplices. He was deprived of his benefice, and his goods were confiscated<sup>f</sup>.

Hard fate of  
Fulbert.

We hear no more of this unhappy man, whose fate was peculiarly hard. Deceived by him, on whose integrity, he presumed, he might rely; and deserted by a niece, in whose happiness all his affections centered, is it surprising, he should fly to vengeance for redress?—Abeillard, with a selfish indignation, which a great soul could not have harboured, arraigned, as too indulgent, the sentence of Fulbert's judges, and called the bishop and his clergy, the accomplices of his guilt<sup>g</sup>.—Even Heloisa seemed to have no feeling left for the poor old man. In her letters she mentions his name with horror, and sees no alleviation to his guilt. When time and religion had worn off the edge of passion; possibly she

<sup>c</sup> Hist Calam.

<sup>f</sup> Fulco ut supra.

<sup>g</sup> Ibid.

BOOK III. would view his conduct with a more indulgent eye: his name, at least, is registered in the mortuary calendar of the Paraclet. There is a time, it seems, when the most resentful minds forgive.

Abeillard  
proposes to  
Heloisa to  
quit the  
world.

Abeillard was unable to withstand the humiliating reflections, which pressed on his mind. The philosophy, he had studied, was not of a nature to speak comfort to him; of religion he knew little more than its splendid theory; and his great talents, the display of which had given exaltation to his name, being once brought low, would only serve to add weight to his depression. His friends in vain consoled him: their pity could but hurt his pride; and their advice, he knew, was unsupported by truth and the opinions of the world. Like Prometheus, he felt the vulture at his breast. In this state of mind, he says, it was, that he looked to the cloister, as the only place, which, at once, could bury his shame, and hide him from the observation of mortals<sup>b</sup>.—He communicated his design to Heloisa, and proposed that she should imitate his example.

Heloisa had not reached her twentieth year. In the vigour of youth and the prime of beauty, could it be supposed, that she also must see charms in a cell, or that she would be inclined to turn her back on a world, with which she had hardly made acquaintance, and which, notwithstanding, had expressed a strong partiality for her character, and an admiration of her talents. But the selfish eunuch knew the excess of her love for him, and of this he would avail himself: could she be his companion no longer, the remainder of her days should be devoted to solitude, and the

<sup>b</sup> Hist. Calam.

pure colloquy of angels.—It is not said, how Heloisa received this generous proposal; but, as we know from her own letters, that the natural dispositions of her mind were averse from the cloister; it is probable she would expostulate with Abeillard: she would assure him of her unalterable regard; that it should never be in the power of man to divide her heart; that the world should ever-more be hateful to her; but that, as she felt no inclination to the veil, she hoped, she might be permitted to spend her life, a voluntary recluse, without the tie of eternal vows, within the walls of Argenteuil.

The proud man was irritated by this gentle expostulation, and he ordered her instantly to comply<sup>1</sup>. Heloisa assented.

“ It was not religion, says she, which called me to the cloisters: I was then in the bloom of youth; but you ordered, and I obeyed.”—The sacrifice was not yet complete. She had, indeed, promised to comply with his injunctions; but was he sure, should he first engage himself, and leave her at liberty, that she might not violate her promise, and return to the world. He was therefore cruel enough to signify his suspicions, and to insist, that she bound herself first. “ When you had resolved to quit the world, she says to him, I followed you; rather I ran before you. It seems, you had the image of the patriarch’s wife before your eyes: You feared I might look back; and therefore before you could surrender your own liberty, I was to be devoted. In that one instance, I confess, your mistrust of me tore my heart: Abeillard, I blushed for you. Heaven knows, had I seen you hastening to perdition, at a single word, I should

<sup>1</sup> Hist. Calam. Ep. Helois. 1<sup>a</sup>.

BOOK III. “ should not have hesitated to have followed, or to have  
 “ preceded you. My soul was no longer in my own possession<sup>k</sup>. ”

She is professed a nun.

Having submitted also to this harsh demand, and choosing the abbey of Argenteuil for her long residence, a day was fixed for the solemn ceremony of her profession.

It was, by this time, no longer a secret, that Abeillard and Heloisa had been married: the story of their adventures was generally known; it was known what had infligated Fulbert to his savage revenge; and it was now known, that the lovers were retiring from the world, and that the places of their abode were chosen.

The day came. Curiosity had drawn crowds to Argenteuil. The bishop of Paris officiated in the ceremony; and having blessed the holy veil, which was to cover the head of the victim, he laid it on the altar. The assembly stood in silent expectation: the gates of the cloister opened, and Heloisa came forward.—She was clothed in the becoming dress of the order; her attitude marked resignation to her fate; and the hand of affliction had given to her features an angelic softness.—As by a mechanical impulse every bosom thrilled with compassion: it had been whispered that her sacrifice was involuntary: numbers pressed round her; and her approach to the altar was impeded<sup>l</sup>.—They begged her not to proceed; they urged the fatality of the step; they accused her pretended friends of cruelty; they spoke of her beauty, of her charms, of her talents, and of the horrors of a cloister.—Heloisa was visibly affected; but not by their expostulations: the fate of Abeillard alone, who was soon  
 to

<sup>k</sup> Ep. Hel. 1<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>l</sup> Hist. Calam.

to tread the same mournful path, hung heavy on her heart: BOOK III.  
tears rolled down her cheeks; and, in broken accents, she  
was heard to pronounce the words of Cornelia:

O maxime conjux!  
O Thalamis indigne meis! Hoc juris habebat.  
In tantum fortuna caput? Cur impia nupsi,  
Si miserum factura fui? Nunc accipe pœnas,  
Sed quas sponte luam.

Lucan. Phar. l. 8.

Uttering the last words, as she strove to advance, the crowd separated: her resolution rose fuller on her countenance: she mounted the steps of the altar: put her hand on the veil, with which she covered her face: and pronounced distinctly the fatal vows, which were to sever her from the world and Abeillard for ever<sup>m</sup>.

The heroism of this action has seldom, I believe, been equalled. But love and the peculiar strength of her mind, would have carried Heloisa even to more arduous sacrifices, had they been presented to her.—It will be said, that her mind, at the awful moment of giving herself to God, was not in the disposition of a christian votary; that it more resembled a pagan sacrifice; and that, instead of the pious sentiments, agreeable to the occasion, which her mouth should have uttered, she profanely repeated the lines, which Cornelia, with a dagger in her hand, addressed to the manes of Pompey, when she received the news of his death.—It is true: nor did Heloisa, either at the time of taking the veil, or afterwards in life, ever pretend that she had any thing  
in

<sup>m</sup> Hist. Calam.

BOOK III. in view, than merely to obey the command of Abeillard. To have acted a part, inconsistent with this object, became not her character: She wished not to introduce the affectation of religion, where nothing religious was meant: the honesty and candour of her mind revolted at the thought. Indeed, it is manifest, had Abeillard but hinted that the action would have pleased him more, with a Roman countenance, she would have met the point of a dagger, or have swallowed the deadly hemlock.

Years afterwards, turning to this event, she says to Abeillard: “ I obeyed, Sir, the last tittle of all your commands; “ and so far was I unable to oppose them, that, to comply “ with your wishes, I could bear to sacrifice myself. One “ thing remains, which is still greater, and will hardly be “ credited: my love for you had risen to such a degree of “ phrenzy, that to please you, it even deprived itself of “ what alone in the universe it valued (himself), and that “ for ever. No sooner did I receive your commands, than I “ quitted at once the dress of the world, and with it all the “ reluctance of my nature. I meant that you should be the “ sole possessor of whatever I had once a right to call my “ own. Heaven knows, in all my love, it was you, and “ you only, that I fought for—whilst together we enjoyed “ the pleasures, which love affords, the motives of my attachment were to others uncertain. The event has proved “ on what principle I started. To obey you I sacrificed all “ my pleasures: I reserved nothing, the hope only excepted, that so I should become more perfectly your own. “ —For this sacrifice, if I have no merit in your eyes, vain “ indeed is all my labour! From God I can look for no “ reward,

“reward, for whose sake, it is plain, I have as yet done nothing<sup>n</sup>.”—“Through the whole course of my life, she says in another letter, heaven knows, what have been my dispositions. It was you, and not God, whom I feared most to offend; you, and not God, I was most anxious to please. My mind is still unaltered. It was no love of him, but solely your command which drew me to Argenteuil. How miserable then my condition, if, undergoing so much, I have no prospect of a reward hereafter! By appearances, you may have been deceived like others: you ascribed to the impressions of religion, what sprang from another source<sup>o</sup>.”

Used to contemplate in ourselves and others, human nature, as cast in common molds, we view its eccentricities with the mixed emotions of astonishment and pleasure. Of this description was Heloisa. She was born in a century, remarkable for ignorance and a blind attachment to the weakest follies; her education, within the walls of a convent, had been little adapted to improve her understanding or to enlarge her heart; and, at the time she began and finished the bold tragedy, I have described, the blossom of life was but in its first stage of expansion: yet already she was learned, to the admiration of France, and her mind had acquired a boldness of conception, and a sufficiency in itself, which carried her far beyond the ideas of her sex, and the adopted maxims of the age. In the most brilliant days of Roman greatness, Heloisa would have been a splendid character.—Her notions of moral and religious duty may be deemed too free: but my surprise rather is, from

<sup>n</sup> Ep. Helois, 1<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>o</sup> Ep. 2<sup>a</sup>.

Q

whence

BOOK III. whence she could have drawn them. She had read, we know, the scriptures, and she had meditated on the works of the fathers of the church: but, as in the sense and application of the doctrine, they contained, she was told to adhere to low comments and trifling interpretations, her mind was unsatisfied: she did not find in them that sublimity of thought and fulness of idea, which could meet the expanding energy of her soul.—She turned to the compositions of the old philosophers; and she dwelt, with rapture, on the poets of Greece and Rome. Here she was free to range, unhackled by rules, and unoppressed by authority. In them the romantic cast of her soul found something which accorded with its feelings; and she became the disciple of Epicurus, of Seneca, and of Ovid, without perceiving that she had quitted the amiable purity of the christian scheme, and the severer morality of ecclesiastical discipline.—When guides are ignorant, or when maxims are suggested, unfounded on truth or clogged with puerilities, a great mind is disgusted; it begins to think for itself; and imperceptibly adopts singularities, perhaps extravagancies: but they are the extravagancies of genius, and the errors of bold nature. When the eagle rises to meet the sun, it leaves the earth and all its beaten paths far below it.

Abeillard becomes a monk at St. Denys.

Abeillard having completed one part of his design, hastened to the execution of the other. He had chosen the abbey of St. Denys for his retirement; and there he entered, a few days only after Heloisa had made her vows at Argenteuil<sup>p</sup>.—The abbey of St. Denys, so celebrated in French history, for the munificent donations of the living, and as the

<sup>p</sup> Ep. Helois. 1<sup>a</sup>.



the repository of the ashes of her dead kings, was not then so splendidly magnificent, as it had been. Dagobert, its founder, had covered part of the roof with plates of silver; and the internal decorations were answerable to it. It is said, that Clovis the second, at a time of public distress, unroofed the gorgeous monument, and, with a more laudable liberality, distributed it piecemeal to the necessitous. The Norman ravagers, in the ninth century, did not spare this sumptuous pile; they pillaged its riches, and nearly reduced the whole fabric to a heap of ruins<sup>q</sup>. It belonged to the Benedictine order of monks; and as their revenues were immense, St. Denys soon recovered from its delapidation, and was in high splendor, when Abeillard submitted his head to the cowl. But the monastic discipline of its inhabitants, which had been broken down, as it always happens, in the general desolation, had not recovered, in the same proportion, as the edifices, which stone and mortar easily repaired.

A man of Abeillard's talents and reputation would be received with open arms. The joy was reciprocal; for here it was that he looked for repose, and in constrained lowliness of spirit, dared to hope, that the world would forget him. The world did not co-operate with his wishes. His absence from Paris was soon felt; his scholars (the number of whom, as a contemporary author relates<sup>r</sup>, collected from all parts of Europe, exceeded whatever had before been seen,) were vociferous in their complaints; they disturbed the peace of the city, and threatened to retire, if Abeillard could not be prevailed on to resume his lectures. Other

<sup>q</sup> Fleury vol. xi.

<sup>r</sup> Fulco ad Abeil.

BOOK III. professors in vain offered their instructions.—It was resolved that deputies should wait on him in his cell<sup>f</sup>.

The philosopher had hardly recovered from his wounds, and was beginning to taste the gentle comforts of retirement, when suddenly his reveries were interrupted, and he was publicly called on to return to the schools. In the depression of spirits, with which he had just quitted the world, confounded, penitent, and disgusted, the proposal, at first, startled him: he did not conceive it to be sincere, and he might suspect it was rather meant to ridicule, than seriously to do him honour. He refused to comply. On this they went in greater numbers; St. Denys thronged with the crowds: and first they waited on the abbot, requesting he would permit Abeillard to come to them, and would even command him to leave his cell, should he persevere in his refusal. They begged to see their old master, and to him, in the warmest terms, they urged their petition.—Would he, they said, generous and disinterested as he was, who had done so much to gratify the world and his own desires, now do nothing on the more noble principle of serving God and his religion? He should reflect, with what interest, the talents, which heaven had so liberally conferred, would be redemanded from him. Hitherto he had given his principal attention to the great and the opulent; it was time that the low and indigent also should receive benefit from his instructions.—They hinted, with some delicacy, at his late misfortune, and suggested that it had been permitted, perhaps, for wise ends: he was now free from many incitements to vice, and withdrawn from the delusions of the world, that  
science

<sup>f</sup> Hist. Calam.

science might possess him more completely to herself. Now BOOK III.  
was the moment, they concluded, to become the true philosopher<sup>t</sup>.—These persuasions had not the desired effect.

But though Abeillard seemed so unwilling to re-engage in his former pursuits; it was not long before he was much disgusted with the manners of the monks of St. Denys. He describes them not only as men, departing from religious discipline, and addicted to the world, but as abandoned to the most shameful passions. The abbot he censures, in terms equally severe: “As by office, he says, he was raised  
“above others, so was his life more criminal, and his infamy more notorious<sup>v</sup>.”—This account is thought to be unfair. He wrote it at a time of great irritation; when he had reason to conceive himself unjustly persecuted: to retaliate he dipt his pen in gall<sup>u</sup>.

Let there be some exaggeration in the story; it is still well known, as I have observed, that but little of the monastic spirit was left at St. Denys.—Abeillard naturally acrimonious, from circumstances rendered more severe, and mistaking, possibly, the effects of ill-temper for the suggestions of pious zeal, hesitated not to declare his disapprobation of their conduct. Privately, and repeatedly, he expostulated with his brethren; but finding such remonstrances ineffectual, he publicly arraigned the enormities of their lives, and, with his powers of language, held up their crimes in full view before them.—The monks were not disposed to admit this check to their amusements; when Adam, their abbot, led the way to pleasure, was Abeillard, a monk of yesterday, whose habit had not yet lost its gloss, to become  
the

<sup>t</sup> Hist. Cal.

<sup>v</sup> Ibid.

<sup>u</sup> Notæ Quercet.

BOOK III. the cenfor of his elders, and to replant the thorns which, with the labour of years, they had been striving to -eradicate: he might pursue, with tasteless perseverance, his own researches, as he pleased, and they would not interrupt his lucubrations; they only asked the same liberty for themselves, which they allowed to him<sup>w</sup>.—What had fallen to the lot of other reformers, Abeillard, I presume, was prepared to expect. His advice was disregarded; perhaps it helped to increase the evil, whilst he himself became the object of universal dislike and hatred.

He resumes  
his lectures.

The young men from Paris still continued their application, and the whole convent of St. Denys was now disposed to co-operate with the petitioners. The moment was favourable to both. Abbot Adam, such I have said was his name, gravely advised Abeillard, as nothing less could give satisfaction to his scholars, if he could possibly surmount his reluctance, to comply with their request; that it was with much difficulty he had prevailed on himself to give his approbation to the measure; that with pain he should see him quit his roof; but that no distance of place should ever untie the band which united him to St. Denys; and that, on his side, such a condescension must be considered as an heroic example of monastic virtue.—The holy brotherhood abetted the solemn farce.—The flimsy subterfuge was easily penetrated: but Abeillard, disgusted of a situation which disappointed his wishes, and flattered into better hopes by the perseverant intreaties of his friends, now thought proper to avail himself of the occasion, and to accede to their proposals.—Paris was judged too dissipated a residence for a religious man;

man; and probably he himself, for obvious reasons, objected to it: therefore a small place in the country was chosen, where, in a few days, he opened his school<sup>x</sup>. BOOK III.

The news was carried to Paris, and from thence very soon it reached the more distant provinces. The conflux of scholars was incessant: there were no habitations to receive them, nor could the country supply food for the multitude<sup>y</sup>.—Some authors speak of more than three thousand, who, at one time, attended his lessons<sup>z</sup>.—How scarce must have been the means of instruction; or how ardent the thirst to acquire it, when the reputation of one man could excite such a ferment in Europe!

Abeillard now directed the force of his genius to theological pursuits. He thought the study more analogous to the new character he had assumed; but as his scholars were very desirous to be instructed also in profane learning, to which he had himself been most habituated, he deemed it proper not to neglect the latter. The charms which, he knew, philosophy would take from his tongue, he determined to convert to a nobler purpose. When his hearers, pleased by the delightful eloquence of their master, at once admired his manner, and imbibed his doctrine, he led them on from subject to subject, and from profane to sacred, till he could fix all their attention on the great truths of revelation or the sublime attributes of the deity<sup>a</sup>.—He well judged that there is a gradation in truth, and that the plainest maxims or the profoundest discoveries are but rays from one common centre.—This method, Abeillard tells us, he took from Origen, the first of christian philosophers; and it was most undoubtedly

<sup>x</sup> Hist Calam.

<sup>y</sup> Ibid.

<sup>z</sup> Vie d'Abeil. 129.

<sup>a</sup> Hist. Calam.

BOOK III. undoubtedly excellent: but there was besides a peculiar reason, why Origen should be the master he preferred to imitate.

It soon appeared, that the talents of Abeillard were equally competent to every pursuit, and that it was only exercise which had given him the first place in philosophy. He interpreted the holy scriptures, with the same facility, as the commentaries of Aristotle: and divine truths seemed to owe as much to his exposition, as did the most abstruse deductions of reason. His school daily swelled with auditors, and the benches of other professors were deserted.—If opposition should now be raised against him, it would evidently be dictated by envy or low passion. There was no competitor or proud master to irritate.

The fame of Abeillard extended, and the whole college of professors took the alarm: something, it was necessary, should be done, to save their falling interest. Two objections, it seemed, they could raise against him, and these they were resolved to enforce. He was a monk, they said, and consequently the study of profane literature was abhorrent from his profession: besides, dared he not to open the sacred volumes of scripture, and to interpret their mysterious words, when it was notorious he had never received any regular documents from a master<sup>b</sup>? His treatment of the renowned Anselm was well remembered.—On this ground the professors rested their opposition; and they hoped to prevail. Archbishops, bishops, abbots, and the whole description of churchmen, were importuned to espouse their quarrel.

<sup>b</sup> Hist. Calam.

The method, which Abeillard had adopted, was highly approved by many; and they who, hitherto, felt themselves oppressed by authority, were relieved by the rational forms, he introduced into theological discussions. What he had written, on philosophical and literary subjects, had been read with pleasure, and they flattered him that his genius, at least with equal facility, might penetrate the secrets of religion<sup>c</sup>. They requested that, to the authorities either of scripture or fathers, which were generally adduced to prove the dogmas of christianity, he would superadd such elucidations, as might seem expedient to render them more agreeable to reason. The introduction of obscure terms, they thought, was futile; because what they did not understand they could not believe; and that it was ridiculous to speak of things, of which neither the master, nor his scholars, had any fixed idea: such masters might truly be called the blind leaders of the blind<sup>d</sup>.

These were bold notions for the twelfth century; but they were necessary to dispel the Cimmerian darkness, which had so long enveloped the christian world. When the seeds of moral or of physical evils have taken deep root, it is not a gentle effort which will draw them out.—The liberty of reasoning on mysterious matters had, by some philosophers, been carried to undue lengths. Proud of their logical acuteness, because, agreeably to certain rules of art, they could form a syllogism, they saw nothing, in the whole range of grace or nature, which should outstretch their comprehension. Roscelin, whom I have mentioned, had taken the lead among these philosophising christians.

<sup>c</sup> Prolog. ad Theolog.

<sup>d</sup> Hist. Calam.

BOOK III. Abeillard, induced by the arguments of his scholars, and not a little prompted by his own natural bias, undertook the arduous work. He would shew, that the great points of religion were not adverse to human reason; he would render them more palpable by comparisons drawn from common nature; and from the notions even of the pagan philosophers themselves, he would demonstrate how weak were the objections of modern reasoners against the mysteries of revelation. With this view, he composed and published, in three books, his *Introductio ad Theologiam*<sup>c</sup>.

Religion, observes Abeillard, has not a nobler object, than the doctrine of the *Trinity*; and the names of the three persons describe that being which is infinitely perfect. The name of the father announces power; the name of the son announces wisdom; and the name of the holy spirit announces goodness or charity. The union of these three constitutes perfection.—Nor does the distinction of persons rest here: it also tends to generate in the breast of man such sentiments, as may carry him to the adoration of his maker. On fear and love is founded respect: fear is produced by the ideas of power and wisdom: and we love that being, which is kind and beneficent.

It was this mystery, he says, which vain reason principally attacked; therefore he aims to defend it.

The founder of the christian system did but develope the mysterious Trinity. It was known, he thinks, to the prophets, and to the ancient schools of philosophers; and to the latter it was revealed, in recompence of their virtues. He praises the eminent qualifications of their minds, the  
purity

<sup>c</sup> Op. Abeil. p. 973.



purity of their manners, the excellence of their morality; and he dares to give them a feat of happiness in those regions, to which some christians, in too vain a partiality, pretend an exclusive right. BOOK III.

- He then meets the arguments of his adversaries, and attempts to solve their subtle intricacies. He explains the nature of each person, and their differential properties. The language he here uses is that of modern Trinitarians. —There exists not in nature, he observes, a being, in which a plurality of persons subsists with unity of essence. It is only by analogies or distant comparisons that any notion can be formed; and these must be imperfect.—The co-eternity of the persons he exemplifies by the light of the sun, which co-exists with the source of its generation or procession.

From the Trinity he turns to the power of God, and discusses the high question, whether God could have acted otherwise, than he has done, in the creation of things. He weighs, with a steady hand, the principle and the order of the divine decrees. Wisdom and goodness, he says, are the attributes, by which the almighty power is directed: they presided over all his works. If therefore there be any good, which remains unrealised, it was his wisdom which forbade its education. Every thing has been made which power, wisdom, and goodness, could effect. More than what God has done, he concludes, he could not have done; nor could he have done it otherwise; nor was he free not to have done it.—This is the doctrine of Optimism, which, the great Leibnitz, in an after-age, more fully expounded, strengthening it with those powers of argument, which his vast genius was able to supply.

## BOOK III.

I have briefly stated the contents of this volume, which is written not inelegantly, and which contains matter of profound and intricate discussion. Abeillard boldly meets the argument; he displays a considerable share of erudition and of logical acuteness; but if he flattered himself that he rendered more intelligible what was before obscure, and has ever continued so, his eye was organized to see light in darkness. There was novelty in his manner of treating religious questions; and that it was which pleased his own vanity, and raised the admiration of his readers. Less bigotted than his contemporaries, and less awed by authority, the mind of Abeillard took a wider range; but, at the same time, he expresses a diffidence of himself, and a willingness to submit his writings to the judgment of the church, and to the criticism of the learned.

The applause, which followed the publication of this work, was great: it appeared that Abeillard had drawn aside the veil, under which the doctrines of christianity had hitherto been covered; he had done away the difficulties, in which mysterious questions were involved; and he had answered the abstrusest objections of their adversaries<sup>f</sup>. Novelty of expression they mistook for novelty of idea; unfounded opinions were to them authentic documents; and in his weak allusions to material objects they discovered the strongest illustrations of intellectual truths.—A work of this nature was evidently open to sinister interpretations; and it could not be that his enemies would view it with impartial eyes.

Albericus and Lotulphus, who have been mentioned as the rivals of Abeillard, when he studied divinity under Anselm:

<sup>f</sup> Hist. Calam.

Anselm at Laon, now came forward. The animosity, they had formerly entertained against him, had increased with their years, and had grown with the reputation of Abeillard. Anselm and William de Champeaux were both dead<sup>g</sup>; and to their honours it was the ambition of these two men to succeed. They were professors in Reims, and Abeillard seemed only to obstruct the spread of their reputation. When the work, I have mentioned, appeared, they read it; and it need not be said, with what dispositions. Its excellencies were no objects to them; but its blemishes they construed into shocking deformities, and its casual mistakes into monstrous errors: his deviations from common language were heretical innovations. He that looks for heterodoxy will be sure to find it.—They waited on the archbishop of their diocese, and laid the impious work at his feet<sup>h</sup>.

For some time had the good man been ill-disposed towards Abeillard. Unable to judge for himself, he had relied on the assertions of others. Albericus and his colleague were loud in their accusations: their repeated suggestions alarmed the pious zeal of the prelate; and having raised in his mind a high opinion of their own orthodoxy, they now dared publicly to criminate Abeillard, and to demand the condemnation of his book.—By their advice, Rodolphus, such was the archbishop's name, engaged to call a synod of his suffragan bishops, at Soissons. The pope's legate was then in France: him they invited to preside at their meeting, that, with one accord, they might proceed to the weighty business. Abeillard was cited to appear before the council, and to bring along with him the work he had composed. He obeyed<sup>i</sup>.

<sup>g</sup> Hist. Calam.

<sup>h</sup> Ibid.

<sup>i</sup> Ibid.

## BOOK III.

He is cited  
before the  
council of  
Soissons, and  
condemned.

In the mean time, his enemies were not idle. Albericus and Lotulphus had circulated many reports against him, and the minds of the multitude were inflamed to a degree of fury. He had dared to teach, they were told, that there were three Gods—Abeillard, with a few companions, confiding in his own integrity, and unsuspecting of the machinations of his enemies, went to Soissons on the appointed day. His astonishment was great, when he heard the wild clamours of the citizens, and saw the preparations they had made to stone him to death. They would avenge, they said, the insulted honour of their maker, and not wait the slow process of a council. Abeillard, however, escaped, and presented himself before the legate<sup>k</sup>.

He held his book on the Trinity in his hand: “If I have written any thing, said he in a submissive but manly tone, which varies from the belief of my ancestors and the faith of the church, behold me prepared to retract it, or to make satisfaction. This is the work, I have written: take it, Sir; read it; and judge.”—The legate, who is represented as a man of worth, well versed in political intrigue, but as no adept in theological intricacies, very politely declined the proposal, and referred Abeillard to the archbishop of Reims. The scheme probably was preconcerted: for by this means, his accusers, who were the confidential friends of the archbishop, became his judges.

Albericus and Lotulphus, proud of the censorial commission, with alacrity opened the detested volume; they weighed its contents in the unfair balance of prejudice, and with wonderful malevolence, they misconstrued, misconceived, and

<sup>k</sup> Hist. Calam.

and misrepresented.—If there be an easy task, it is to descry errors in the opinions of those who dissent from us; and never is the eye of criticism so penetrating, as when the zeal of overweening orthodoxy animates the inquiry. Religion, which should temper animosity, and give a gentle check to the selfish passions, often serves to imbitter controversy. We lose sight of its high and important character; our own feelings we ingraft on the venerable stock; and we arrogantly fancy it is the love of sacred truth that inspires us, when the base suggestions of our own minds are the guides which point the way.

The holy inquisitors found ample matter for reprehension: they were scandalised by novelty of expression; in words of an equivocal meaning they could read a dangerous tendency to heresy; and, at every page, their pious ears were offended; because, at every page, Abeillard had either departed from the old forms of language, or he had dared to explain what they deemed inexplicable, or he had attempted to make that appear rational, the principal merit of which consisted, they thought, in its opposition to common sense, and in a darksome intricacy of mystery. Still they were unsatisfied. A moment's reflection told them, that the fathers of the council might be more favourably inclined to Abeillard than themselves; that his book really contained nothing which was expressly heterodox; that the learning and reputation of the author were vast; and should he be permitted, in public assembly, to make his defence or to explain his own doctrine, it might be too hazardous to expose themselves to the impetuosity of his eloquence or to the danger of a defeat. They chose then what seemed the  
most

BOOK III. most prudent step: they waited on the legate; they magnified the importance, and the intricacy of the business; they talked of the multiplicity of their own engagements, which hourly called them off from the main enquiry; and they proposed, as other matters were to be debated in council, that the condemnation of Abeillard might be postponed to the close of the sessions. The legate assented<sup>1</sup>.

Abeillard, during the celebration of the synod, was permitted to preach in public; and every day, from the pulpit, before a large concourse of people, he selected some point of christian belief, which he explained, agreeably to the principles he had advanced in his book. His discourses gave wonderful satisfaction: such perspicuity of language, and such a comprehension of religious truths, their ears had never witnessed. "Is this the man, said they, who believes  
 " in three Gods, and whose doctrines, we were told, are  
 " detestable! He now speaks publicly, and where are his  
 " accusers to controvert his assertions? The synod draws to  
 " a conclusion; it was convened against Abeillard; but as  
 " yet we have not seen him at their bar. Have our pre-  
 " lates, perchance, discovered that themselves, rather than  
 " Abeillard, are in error?"—Such were the observations which all ranks of men openly repeated in the streets of Soissons. With silent indignation his enemies heard them.

At length, the fatal discovery was made by Albericus. With incessant labour he had wasted the nightly lamp, and, in anguish of mind, was ready to desist from all further pursuit, when a passage, big with the most noxious heresy, burst on his aching sight. With exultation he closed the page, threw

<sup>1</sup> Vie d'Abeil. p. 157.

<sup>m</sup> Hist. Calam.

threw himself on his couch for a momentary repose, and was ready, early in the morning, to wait on Abeillard. The proposition he meant to bring before the council, clothed in its most horrid features; but how could he forego the luxury of an anticipated triumph, over the author himself, in a personal interview? He was accompanied by some of his scholars.—When the usual complimentary speeches were made, and they had talked on some general topics: “I have read your work,” said Albericus, in a magisterial tone, and with a countenance, which spoke the swell of his heart.—“Have you?” observed Abeillard drily.—“I have, continued he, and in it my eye has fallen on a proposition, from the horror of which, it will be long, before my mind recovers its wonted serenity.”—Abeillard seemed rather struck, and begged he would speak out.—“There is but one God,” said Albericus.—“It is very true,” replied Abeillard.—“This one God, continued Albericus, generated his word, which is also God.”—“That also is true,” said Abeillard.—“It is true, observed Albericus smartly, and yet you dare assert, that God cannot generate himself! This is the blasphemous proposition.”—The last words were uttered with an air of the most unbounded confidence.—Abeillard smiled: “I will prove the truth of that proposition, said he, only listen to my arguments.”—“What care I for your arguments, said Albericus, your reason, or your common sense: is religion to be weighed in their scales? Authority, Sir, the impression of authority, is all I look for.”—“You shall have authority, replied Abeillard: open that work of Austin, which, I perceive, you have brought with you, and you will find it.”

S

Albericus

BOOK III. Albericus turned over the leaves, but found nothing.—“ I  
 “ will shew you where it is,” said Abeillard, taking the book  
 into his own hands, and immediately pointing to the follow-  
 ing passage: “ He who imagines that God has power to ge-  
 “ nerate himself, is the more in error, because not only  
 “ God cannot do it, but because there is no creature, cor-  
 “ poral or spiritual, to which the capacity can belong. No  
 “ being can give existence to itself<sup>n</sup>.”

The young men, who came with Albericus, were amazed, and blushed: their master was not so easily disconcerted.—  
 “ The passage, you have read me, said he, after some pause,  
 “ is easily susceptible of a favourable interpretation.”—“ It  
 “ may, replied Abeillard; but as you asked for bare autho-  
 “ rity, any comment, it should seem, would be, at this  
 “ time, rather unseasonable: and were you not, continued  
 “ he ironically, so great an enemy to ratiocination and  
 “ common argument, I think, I could make it appear that  
 “ Albericus himself, agreeably to his own principles, has  
 “ fallen into the wild heresy of those, who maintain, that  
 “ the father is the son of himself.”—At the sound of the  
 word *heresy*, Albericus was no longer master of himself: what  
 rage could dictate, he threw out against Abeillard, re-  
 proaches, menaces, abuse. “ The day is at hand, said he,  
 “ when neither reason nor authority shall avail your pur-  
 “ pose<sup>o</sup>.”—He turned on his heel, and departed.

The next day, which was the last of the council, before  
 the chamber opened, the legate and archbishop held a long  
 conference with the prosecutors of Abeillard, and many of  
 their confidential friends. It was debated, what was most  
 proper

▪ Aug. l. 1. de Trin.

• Hist. Calam.



proper to be done with Abeillard and his book, for the condemnation of which the synod had been convoked. In the work itself, after mature examination, nothing had been discovered, which seemed to merit ecclesiastical censure, and the discourses, he had publicly delivered, were universally applauded. The legate was disposed to suspend all further prosecution, and the assembly inclined to his opinion. A general silence prevailed; his enemies did but mutter indistinct accusations; and even Albericus withheld the dreadful charge, he had threatened to produce against him. Gaufridus, bishop of Chartres, a prelate venerable for his piety and consummate learning, rose from his seat, and spoke.

“ You, who hear me, well know the profound erudition  
 “ of this man: to whatever studies he has turned his application, you know, what applause has surrounded him,  
 “ and you have counted the number of his followers; the  
 “ high fame of the professors we esteemed most, and that  
 “ of his own masters, you know, how easily he has eclipsed;  
 “ and you know, that the wide branches of his reputation  
 “ have reached from sea to sea. Should you pronounce a  
 “ precipitate sentence against Abeillard, (of which I do not  
 “ suspect you capable,) what indignation will it not raise?  
 “ The tongues of thousands will be ready to defend him.  
 “ We have seen that the work, in question, contains nothing  
 “ which we can publicly criminate. Take care therefore  
 “ that you add not to his glory by any violent proceedings,  
 “ and detract from your own reputations in the same proportion. Would you wish to act, agreeably to the established canons of discipline? The way is open before you.

BOOK III. “ Exhibit your charges in public assembly; Abeillard shall  
 “ be present, and shall hear each head of accusation distinctly urged against him. His own confession, or conviction from authentic documents, will decide betwixt us;  
 “ and the sentence, we shall pronounce, will impose an  
 “ eternal silence on him, and meet the approbation of his  
 “ warmest admirers<sup>p</sup>.”

This discourse, dictated by good sense and a just appreciation of things, was clamorously opposed by the adverse faction. “ The advice is admirable! said they: shall we  
 “ enter the lists with a man whose verbosity is eternal? Not  
 “ the world combined could long withstand his sophisms  
 “ and captious argumentation.”—Perceiving they were not to be prevailed on to adopt the reasonable measure, Geoffrey proposed another scheme, to which, he flattered himself, the inveteracy of their prejudices might give way. Having remarked, that the cause was of considerable moment, and that the council, from the paucity of its members, was hardly adequate to the decision; he moved, that the abbot of St. Denys, who was present, should reconduct Abeillard to his convent, and that there, in a more numerous and respectable convocation, the business should be maturely weighed and terminated.—To this the legate and the rest of the company assented; and the bishop was commissioned to inform Abeillard, that he had permission to return to St. Denys<sup>q</sup>.

Albericus and Lotulphus could not approve this placid resolution: they saw there was an end to their scheme of humbling the pride of Abeillard, should his cause be tried out of the diocese of Reims, where only their voice, they  
 knew,

<sup>p</sup> Hist. Calam.

<sup>q</sup> Ibid.

knew, could command attention; besides, how humiliating was the reflection that, with all their high words, they had done nothing, and that the enemy might draw glory from their disgrace. They waited on the archbishop, whom they easily persuaded into their opinion: “ Would it not reflect  
 “ ignominy on himself and them, they said, that the here-  
 “ tic, who had been cited to their tribunal, should be al-  
 “ lowed to retire, uncensured and free, as he came; and  
 “ that another court only should be judged competent to  
 “ the puny decision: who would now dare to check the pro-  
 “ gress of the insolent innovator, if the metropolitan of  
 “ Reims must truckle before him?”

Thus having obtained the consent of the archbishop to continue the prosecution, they directed their attack on the legate. But it might be no easy task to shake the resolution of a man who, but a few minutes before, had, in a public assembly, declared his sentiments. The professors knew the ground they trod on, they knew the character of the Italian prelate, and from the experience they had just had of their own powers of persuasion, they doubted little of the event. Admitted to his presence, therefore, they repeated the arguments, with many additional clauses, which had so happily succeeded with the archbishop. The legate who, in the whole business, had relied much on the opinions of others, was not unwilling, in this instance also, to surrender his own better judgment. “ But, said he, if it be your  
 “ wish and that of the metropolitan, that the prosecution  
 “ continue, are you prepared to meet Abeillard, as this is  
 “ the last day of the council, and the business can be pro-  
 “ tracted

BOOK III. “tracted no longer?”—The professors hesitated: the scheme, they had projected, they hardly knew how to bring forward. “Does it seem necessary to your Eminence, at length said they, in the gentle tone of adulation, that Abeillard appear in council; that he be permitted to reply to objections, and to make his own defence?—And can judgment be pronounced, without these conditions? observed the legate with an air of indignation.—Abeillard, continued they, is a man, dangerous and seductive in his discourse: besides, has he not dared to open public schools, legally unqualified to teach? And this base volume before us, did he not publish it, and did he not disperse it through the christian world, without the consent of his bishop, without the approbation of the church, and without the sanction of the Roman pontiff?”—The courtly legate was visibly struck by the last words.—“Why then, urged the professors impetuously, be awed by idle formalities? Let the book be condemned, without further inquisition; and Abeillard, with his own hands, shall give it to the flames. It will be an example useful to the daring insolence of future innovators.—The measure is violent, replied the legate, but if the archbishop and you, his counsellors, deem it expedient, I shall not withhold my consent, tho’ I give it reluctantly<sup>f</sup>.”

The bishop of Chartres was soon apprised of the infamous resolution; and he waited on Abeillard: he acquainted him of the whole intrigue, and by what means it had been conducted. Lamenting the violence of his enemies, and the weak condescension of the legate and the archbishop, he entreated

<sup>f</sup> Hist. Calam.

entreated him to submit, with a manly resignation, to the will of his superiors, however unjust or imperious it might seem. He remarked, that such proceedings would bring infinite disgrace to his prosecutors, and that his own glory would only rise more resplendent from the storm. He hinted at what he had heard, that it was their final determination to move, that he be imprisoned in some convent for life. He knew, he said, that the legate acted in opposition to himself, and that as soon as he should be free from the restraints of the synod, he would immediately release him from any confinement, to which he might be sentenced. Other arguments he used to strengthen and to console him:—Abeillard was thunderstruck, and the unexpected vengeance of his enemies unmanned him: he promised to submit. The bishop again spoke comfort to him, and, in retiring, shewed how much he pitied his cruel fate: his good heart melted into tears, and they were mingled with those of Abeillard<sup>t</sup>.

In a few minutes, Abeillard was summoned before the council. He appeared. The legate abruptly announced the final resolution. “It is our will, said he, that you “burn your own book.”—A fire was lighted before him: Abeillard seized the volume, and threw it into the flames.

The arbitrary measure, and the promptitude, with which Abeillard submitted, struck the assembly. It was necessary to weaken this impression: the legate, more than any other, shewed marks of dissatisfaction: a friend to the measure therefore whispered in his ear: “I saw this horrible sentence in his book; that God the Father is alone almighty!”

—The

<sup>t</sup> Hist. Calam.

BOOK III. —The legate caught the words, and rising, with an amazed countenance, said: “ There is not a school-boy, that could  
 “ err so grossly: the common faith of Christendom professes  
 “ to believe, that there be three almighties.”—*And yet, there be not three almighties, but one almighty*, jeeringly exclaimed a learned doctor, who stood in the assembly, quoting the symbol of Athanasius.—His remark was censured as a petulant attack on the dignity of their president.—Terricus, such was the name of the bold divine, nothing daunted by the general clamour, proceeded in the words of Daniel: “ Why  
 “ are you thus foolish, children of Israel? Not judging, or  
 “ knowing what is true, you have condemned a son of  
 “ Israel; return to judgment. You have chosen a judge,  
 “ continued he, who might instruct us in truth, and correct error; and this judge stands condemned in his own  
 “ words: remember the fate of Susanna; and do you also  
 “ free Abeillard from the hands of his unjust accusers.”—The attack was pointed and forcible; but should it pass unnoticed, the consequences might be serious. The archbishop, with much solemnity, rose from his seat. “ My  
 “ Lord Cardinal, said he, in a small change of words, has  
 “ spoken the language of Athanasius: *The Father is almighty,*  
 “ *the Son is almighty, and the Holy Ghost is almighty.* He who  
 “ dissents from this is a heretic: we shall not listen to his  
 “ defence.”

He then told the assembly that, if agreeable to their wishes, he would propose that Abeillard make a public profession of his faith before them; that if orthodox, it might be approved; if heterodox, be censured.—The philosopher shewed the utmost willingness; but as he was beginning to  
 speak,

BOOK III.  
speak, his adversaries called out, that his words were not required; that the symbol of Athanasius would be a better test of his belief. They presented the symbol to him: "You may not be much versed in that sacred formulary, said they sneeringly, or your memory may deceive you."—The ceremony, with all its circumstances, was too humiliating: the greatest man in the literary world was reduced to the puerile task of reading his profession of faith: any child, says he, might have done as much.—He read, he sighed, he sobbed, he wept; whilst his enemies exulted, and the council, in secret triumph, looked down on the fallen man<sup>v</sup>.

As if guilty, and fully convicted of atrocious errors, Abeillard was then delivered into the hands of the abbot of St. Medard. This was a celebrated convent in the town of Soissons; and they meant he should there remain, as in the secure confinement of a prison. The abbot took him by the hand, and conducted him to his cloister.—Thus ended the council of Soissons, in the year 1121, much to the satisfaction of the archbishop of Reims, and of those malignant divines, who had so inveterately persecuted Abeillard. At this time, he was in the forty-second year of his age<sup>u</sup>.—The whole account of this transaction is likewise, to all appearance, too deeply coloured, as I have already, on other occasions, remarked: but the memoirs of Abeillard are the only sources of information.

The abbot of St. Medard was a man of great worth; and we are told that his monks were not less remarkable for their literary endowments, than for the exemplary conduct of their lives<sup>w</sup>. In such a society, Abeillard, it seems, might

He is confined at St. Medard.

<sup>v</sup> Hist. Calam.

<sup>u</sup> Fleury vol. xiv.

<sup>w</sup> Vie d'Abeil. p. 185.

BOOK III. have been happy, if happiness could be found in involuntary confinement. They received him with the strongest indications of joy: but sympathizing, at the same time, with him in his hard treatment, they commiserated his fate; they endeavoured to console him; they censured the conduct of his judges; they applauded his heroic submission; they spoke of the number of his admirers; they reviewed the splendid career of his literary life; they extolled the erudition and wonderful perspicuity of his writings; and they promised him a greater increase of fame, from the lowering sky which, at the present moment, seemed to cloud his horizon. Could he be contented to honour their humble retreat with his presence, how brilliant would be the days of St. Medard! They, at least, knew how to value the treasure they possessed, and should it remain with them, their happiness was complete\*.

The soul of Abeillard was too gloomy to admit one ray of comfort; and the soothing speeches of his new brethren and their abbot hardly seemed to reach his ears. He begged to be shewn to his cell.—Anguish, shame, despair, there rushed upon his mind: “And it is thus, thou God of justice, said he, that thou shewest the equity of thy judgments! Is it in chastising the innocent, that thou pretendest to vindicate the ways of thy providence to man! If I am made to be miserable, collect all thy vengeance, and crush the worm, that merits not, it seems, the notice of its maker!” —The blasphemous sound fell upon his heart, and he paused.—“But what was that misfortune, continued he in a less raging tone, which I once suffered, and for which  
“ I deemed

\* Hist. Calam.

† Ibid.



“ I deemed myself the most miserable of mortals, when  
 “ compared with this? Pain of body bears no competition  
 “ with pain of mind. I was then betrayed, infamously  
 “ abused: but here my reputation suffers; the glory of my  
 “ life is blasted for ever. My previous conduct had then been  
 “ bad; I own, it called for chastisement: But now, when  
 “ the purest intention, when solicitude for the honour of  
 “ religion, guided all my views, and urged me to the de-  
 “ fence of truth; I am basely traduced; I am treated as the  
 “ enemy to God and his holy altars<sup>2</sup>.”—His strength was  
 exhausted, and he sank spiritless to the earth.

The arbitrary proceedings of the council no sooner got wind, than a very general clamour was raised against them: indeed, the most partial apologist could not pretend to justify such conduct. The heads of the cabal were even ashamed of themselves, and durst not meet the public reprehension. From their own, they tried to throw the blame on other shoulders. The legate, more than any other, felt the reproach of his conscience, and freely censured his own weak condescension: but to the intrigue and base jealousy of the French faction, he said, the whole infamy of the transaction was ascribable. The reparation, he was able to make to Abeillard, and to the violated rights of ecclesiastical discipline, he was ready to perform. The bishop of Chartres could but applaud the public displeasure, and if he concealed the detail of circumstances which himself had witnessed, it proved that the delicacy of his mind kept pace with the honesty of his heart. Even Albericus and Lotulphus were seen to blush; but versed in the quibbles of

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<sup>x</sup> Hist. Calam.

<sup>y</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>2</sup> Hist. Calam.

BOOK III. sophistry they could evade conviction, and almost ward off the point of censure<sup>a</sup>.

Abeillard had been but a few days at St. Medard, when the legate, to silence the general murmur, and from a conviction of its expediency, and also thinking he had done enough for the gratification of a faction, whose absolute displeasure, it is said, he was not willing to incur, gave notice to the prisoner, that he was at liberty to quit his confinement, and to return to St. Denys<sup>b</sup>.

To quit confinement was a pleasing circumstance; but to return to St. Denys might not be quite so eligible. The news of the first, Abeillard received with rapture: it was an unexpected gleam that at once dissipated the cloudy horrors of his mind; because it told himself and the world, that his confinement had been unjust, that his treatment in the council had been unmerited, that his doctrine had been orthodox, that the flames, which consumed his work, had been lighted up by the breath of envy, of malevolence, of false zeal, or of misjudging dulness.

To return to St. Denys was a serious reflection. His mind recollected the unpleasant hours he had spent in that house of dissipation; and when he compared with it the gentle manners, the religious deportment, the philosophic gravity, and the endearing attention, of the monks of St. Medard, he felt a secret propension which seemed to tie him to his cell. But the hand of arbitrary despotism had confined him there; and should he, from the freest determination, resolve to remain, would it be ascribed to its real motive? No; should the consequences of his removal prove ever so personally

<sup>a</sup> Hist. Calam. Vie d'Abeil.

<sup>b</sup> Ibid.

sonally disagreeable, the world and his enemies should know that he was free. BOOK III.

His reception at St. Denys was not auspicious. He read on the countenances of his brethren, that they were little pleased by his return. For this he was prepared. He observed in their behaviour the same looseness, in their conversation the same impudence, in their table the same intemperance, and, at all times, the same dislike for serious application and abstracted retirement. Experience might have taught him prudence; but the natural impetuosity of his temper, now only exulcerated by ill-usage, made him more severe, and he repeated the harsh reproaches, which they had heard so often from his mouth.—Abeillard resumed his studies, and in solitude sought for comforts, which the society of his brethren could not give him<sup>c</sup>.

He returns to St. Denys.

Thus a few months passed.—Reading in his cell the works of Bede, his eye accidentally fell on a passage, where the venerable man, expounding the *Acts of the Apostles*, says, that Denys the Areopagite, whom St. Paul converted to the christian faith, was afterwards made bishop of Corinth, and not of Athens. If this be so, thought he, then are the monks of this convent, and the French nation itself, much deceived, who fancy, they possess, within these walls, the body of the Areopagite; for their St. Denys, they insist, was bishop of Athens.—“ Here, said he jestingly, to some of “ the monks who were passing by, I can now overthrow “ your most favourite opinion:” and he shewed them the lines in Bede.—They read and reddened.—“ Bede, said “ they in great heat, is a lying scribbler: we well know the “ thousand

<sup>c</sup> Hist. Calam.

BOOK III. “ thousand fables, which swell his ostentatious volumes. It  
 “ is to Hilduinus, abbot formerly of this convent, that we  
 “ give our faith. To ascertain, for ever, the important  
 “ question, he travelled himself into Greece, searching  
 “ every corner of the land, and having found the truth,  
 “ he left it as a certain document to future ages, that  
 “ Denys, the Areopagite, was bishop of Athens, and that  
 “ we possess his bones<sup>d</sup>.”

It was no time for altercation; nor did the subject merit it. Abeillard only smiled, and was silent. But the business was not to be composed so easily. They repeated their observations, extolled Hilduinus, and calumniated Bede.—  
 “ You shall tell us positively your own sentiment, said one  
 “ of them with importunity; which is the most to be relied  
 “ on, Bede or Hilduinus?”—Abeillard declined answering. They urged him to it.—“ If I must speak then, said he, I  
 “ own I cannot avoid preferring the authority of Bede,  
 “ whose works are read and admired, through the whole  
 “ Latin church.”

The reply was blasphemous. Had he denied the prophets, or reviled the religion of Christ, it would have sounded less horribly in their ears. They called him heretic, an enemy to his country, and the calumniator of their holy order. It was now plain, they observed, what had ever been his dispositions towards the convent of St. Denys; nor was it less plain, how little he valued the glory of the Gallic name: dared he not impiously to tear down the palladium, on which rested the splendid security of its fame; the holy patronage of Denys, the Areopagite, bishop of Athens!—

Abeillard

<sup>d</sup> Hist. Calam.

Abeillard in vain strove to sooth their anger. He told them, he had himself formed no decided opinion; that he wished to be informed; that he had barely spoken of the comparative authority of Bede; that he entertained no ideas, hostile to the French name; but that, indeed, he could not discover, why it must be thought a matter of such importance, that the bones, in their church, should be those of the Areopagite, provided it were allowed, that their Denys was a glorious faint<sup>e</sup>.

The convent was instantly in an uproar, and the monks hurried to their abbot, to apprise him of the event. He heard it with the mixed emotions of dismay and satisfaction. It was melancholy, he felt, that a monk of St. Denys should dare to harbour in his breast an opinion, so derogatory from its honour; but he was pleased, that Abeillard should be the man. Now, he flattered himself, he should have it more effectually in his power to chastise him, than had had the synod of Soissons; and the reflections he had made on the intemperance of his conduct had long hung, like a poisoned arrow, in his heart<sup>f</sup>.

The chapter assembled, and Abeillard appeared before them. It was unnecessary to expose, in many words, the atrocity of his crime. The abbot, in solemn language, deplored his obduracy, and threatened him with the heavy vengeance of his own arm and of St. Denys. Nor was that all: “ I will write instantly to the king, said he; he must  
“ avenge his own cause; for seditiously you have assailed  
“ the glory of his empire, and raised your hand against the  
“ sacred

<sup>e</sup> Hist. Calam.

<sup>f</sup> Ibid.

BOOK III. “ sacred diadem. Let him be guarded with the most careful vigilance, till my messenger return<sup>s</sup>.”

Abeillard could hardly believe they were serious: the whole business had rather the appearance of a solemn farce: but when the countenance of his abbot, and the gestures of the monks, had convinced him they were in earnest: “ If I have been guilty of any fault, said he, I am ready to submit to whatever punishment, in the order of monastic discipline, you may judge proper to inflict.”—He was not heard, and they dragged him to his cell.

The reader, who may know, with what warmth, this question, even in the most enlightened period, has been agitated by the French critics, will not be surprised that, in the twelfth century, in the convent itself of St. Denys, it should have raised such a ferment. At length, I believe, the weighty point is decided; for it seems generally agreed among the learned, that Denys the Areopagite suffered martyrdom at Athens in the year 95; and that the other Denys did not come into France till towards the beginning of the third century. He was made first bishop of Paris, and was martyred some years after; when as abbot Hilduinus, the author of the whole fable, whom I have mentioned, relates, he picked up his own head from the ground, and walked away with it. His body rests in the noble abbey which bears his name<sup>h</sup>.

He escapes  
in the night.

Abeillard, though again in desolation, was not disposed to sink under it. This new insult was exasperating, and it roused his passions. If fortune had conspired against him, and the world must be his foe, he had himself only to look to:

<sup>s</sup> Hist. Calam.

<sup>h</sup> Fleury, Nat. Alex. and others.



to: and where is the man who bears not within his own breast an anchor, on which he may securely rest, when billows roll around him? But it was not prudent to expose himself to all the fury of his enemies, nor to wait till the messenger should return from the king. The exaggerated and false reports, which would be carried to his majesty, might rouse him to too signal a vengeance. He determined to escape from St. Denys. BOOK III.

This escape, however, could not be so easily effected. The guards that watched him were vigilant, and they were animated to their office by the severe orders of their superiors, and by their own personal dislike to the prisoner. But for the honour of human nature, never was there a man in distress, who did not find a friend.—Among the monks of St. Denys were some few, who could see the exalted virtues of Abeillard, and could admire them; who could behold the depraved conduct of their brethren, and could pity Abeillard who was exposed to their resentment. Abeillard in their looks read the emotions of their hearts: they had eluded his keepers, and approached him, and he saw the tear of compassion standing in their eyes. He opened his heart to them, and told them his design.—“ We will  
“ favour your escape, said they; fear not. We are men,  
“ and pity you. When the convent shall be sunk to rest,  
“ be ready at the door of your cell: leave the rest to us.”—The hour came: some of his old scholars, who had engaged to be the companions of his flight, were posted near the convent: his keepers were bribed or withdrawn: the signal was given; and Abeillard came out from his cell, blessing

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the

BOOK III. the indulgent night, which, more than once, had been propitious to his designs<sup>1</sup>.

Reflections.

When we review these extraordinary scenes, in which Abeillard has been engaged, we shall certainly be disposed to think rather favourably of him. In the first part of his life, a natural petulance of mind, heightened by ambition, and often by vanity, had hurried him into controversy, and acrid altercations with his masters. When he suffered, we did not pity him.—The tragical event, which then succeeded, we also ascribed to his own misconduct; and I think, we may say, that he deserved it.—But we have lately beheld him persecuted without cause, smarting under the lash of malevolence, traduced where praise should have crowned his labours, and made a butt, against which, ignorance and false zeal, dulness and rancorous jealousy, pride and licentious depravity, directed their shafts.—The exultation of mind which swelled his heart in prosperity, seemed to leave him so enfeebled, when the hour of distress came, that, like a reed, the gentlest blast could bend him. He possessed not the ordinary courage of a man: he desponded, hung his head, and looked for the womanly consolation of solacing his grief in tears.

These observations must be just; for they are founded on the very circumstantial detail he gives of his own adventures and sufferings. When he speaks of his own weaknesses, he may be credited: he even seems to have indulged an extraordinary vanity in the narration: but in the account he gives of other men, of their transactions, and of the motives by which, he says, they were led, great allowance must be made;

<sup>1</sup> Hist. Calam. Vie d'Abeil. p. 206.

made; and I am sometimes almost inclined to believe, that he loved himself, better than he did truth: or, at all events, so dark was the medium, through which he viewed the conduct of others, as it related to himself, that he had it not in his power to form an equitable and candid judgment. Round his own person played a bright and brilliant sunshine, which cast light and amiability on every thought, every design, every undertaking, every action. So he fancied.—Such was Abeillard. BOOK III.

Heloisa he seemed to have forgotten. Absorbed in himself, where was the object, that deserved a moment's thought, if it could not minister to his own happiness? The fancied magnitude of his misfortunes so filled his mind, that there was no room for the cares of others. Heloisa, immured in her cell, could give joy to no other man, and Abeillard was satisfied. Alluding to this period, she says to him: “ But how has it happened, tell me, that after my retreat from the world, which was all your own work, I have been so neglected, or so forgotten, that you never came, either personally to recreate my solitude, or ever wrote a line to console me. If you can, account for this conduct; or I must tell you my own suspicions, which are also the general suspicions of the world. It was passion, Abeillard, and not friendship, which drew you to me; it was not love, but a more base propension. The incitements to pleasure removed, every other more honourable sentiment, to which they might seem to give life, has vanished with them<sup>k</sup>.”

<sup>k</sup> Ep. Helois. 1<sup>a</sup>.

## BOOK III.

The persecutions, to which his doctrinal ideas exposed him, give a strong portrait of the times; but it is a portrait, I fear, which, with some little variation, may be made to represent almost every æra of human existence. Yet we are struck when we see Abeillard before the council of Soissons, treated with such unmerited severity, and we feel comfort in the reflection, that we do not live in so intolerant an age. Comfort we may feel; but he, I think, who, with some attention, has observed the real character even of the present times, will be ready to acknowledge that, if they are less intolerant, it is not because either their principles or their passions are different, but because they dare not, or are ashamed, to profess them. The philosophy of a few, the christian moderation of others, the religious indifference of many, and the modish vices of more, have gained so much on the bigotry, the superstition, the false zeal, the fanaticism of the multitude, that he who dares to be intolerant is laughed at, and he who would persecute is ridiculed.

Yet what are the points which, in the times I am describing, could so warm the breasts of churchmen, and which, in 1786, would perhaps communicate to the same order of men an equal portion of holy fire, were the impediments removed, which I have mentioned? View them abstractedly, as they are generally considered, and it will be found that, they regard not the important worship of our maker, nor the great interests of religion, nor the good of society, nor moral worth, nor our own improvement in virtue, justice, and piety. It has been said, with some semblance of truth, that the holy founder of the christian system, therefore expressed certain doctrines in ambiguous or mysterious language,

language, that men who, he knew, from variety of character, could never adopt unity in belief, might not indeed be free to think as they pleased, (for his language is sufficiently perspicuous,) but that, when they differed from one another, they might find indulgence. If such was his intention, how much have we striven to counteract the wise arrangement? We have quarrelled, and have persecuted, and have tormented one another, with as much presumption, and with the same stubborn acrimony, even when we owned the matters in litigation were impenetrable to human reason, as if they had been self-evident principles, or the most obvious maxims in common life.

And what is it that can rouse this preternatural zeal? When our interest is engaged, or the business comes home to our own feelings, then, I conceive, we may be ardent, we may rush into opposition, or into faction: but when the object is as remote as earth from heaven; when it constitutes, perhaps, a part of those essential attributes, which the deity has pleased to conceal from us, in the dark abyss of his own infinitude; when he has not constituted us his delegates, to represent his person, or to vindicate his rights: why are we arrogantly to erect a tribunal, and call our equals before it? He who made us what we are, would very willingly, I presume, dispense with the forwardness of our zeal, and be more satisfied, that we lived as men, in the improvement of our own natures, and left the things above us to that administration, the wisdom and beneficence of which are best adapted to the important work.

END OF THE THIRD BOOK.



THE  
H I S T O R Y  
OF THE LIVES OF  
ABEILLARD and HELOISA.

B O O K IV.

*The count of Champagne protects Abeillard—The story of Stephen de Garlande—Abeillard retires into the forest of Nogent—He is visited in the forest, and again begins to teach—He builds the Paraclet—Norbert of Premontré—Bernard of Clairvaux—Miracles—Abeillard is chosen abbot of St. Gildas—Argenteuil taken from the nuns—Heloisa goes to the Paraclet—Abeillard is again censured—He fixes at St. Gildas, and is persecuted by his monks.*

Anno, 1122.

**A**BEILLARD, with the few companions of his flight, found himself, by break of day, not far from the spot, to which he had retired, and where he had taught, when, as the reader will recollect, he was suddenly called before the synod of Soissons. The place, indeed, belonged to the abbey of St. Denys, but it lay in the territories of the

**BOOK IV.**

The count of  
Champagne  
protects  
Abeillard.

BOOK IV. the count of Champagne<sup>a</sup>. The count, named Theobald, though a vassal of the French king, was, in other regards, agreeably to the feudatory tenures of the age, an independent prince. Here, should the abbot of St. Denys be disposed to prosecute his subject, or should Lewis of France attempt to punish the culprit, who had dared to think that the patron of his nation might not have been bishop of Athens, Abeillard knew he should be secure, and be protected from insult.

Theobald, a nobleman of splendid virtues, and the great patron of learning, was no stranger to the character of Abeillard. He had seen him, on former occasions, and he had heard the story of his misfortunes and his oppressions: he received him with proper marks of attention; and having inquired into the cause of a visit so unexpected; “In what, said he, can I serve you, Abeillard?”—The philosopher only asked for an asylum, for the common protection which the persecuted may claim.

Near to the gates of Provins, a small town in Champagne, was situated a monastery, the prior of which was the intimate friend of Abeillard. To the roof of this friend he begged leave to retire, and the favour was instantly granted. The good prior came out to meet him; and his countenance shewed that warmth of benevolence, which the full heart, on such occasions only, can express. Abeillard entered, and felt himself happy: he had escaped from danger, and he was now in the arms of a sincere and sympathizing friend<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> Hist. Calam.

<sup>b</sup> Ibid.



In the collection of his works is a letter, which he seems to have written, immediately on his arrival at Provins, to the abbot and monks of St. Denys. It is addressed, in the language of insincerity, to *his most dear father, Adam, by the grace of God, abbot of St. Denys, and to his beloved brothers and co-monks*. Himself he styles, *a monk in dress, in conduct a sinner*. —He says not a word of his precipitate flight, nor alludes to any circumstance of his present situation. The whole letter is on the ridiculous dispute about Denys, the Areopagite. Having considered the point more maturely, or apprehensive, perhaps, that the enemy might dare to pursue him into his secure intrenchments, he is disposed to give up the authority of Bede, and to join those, whose weight, he thinks, should preponderate. It is a weak piece of criticism, and does no more honour to his head, than it did to his heart. What effect it had at St. Denys, we are not told: Abeillard, in his memoirs, does not even mention the circumstance of having written the letter.

He had not been many days at St. Ayoul, such was the name of the convent, when, to his great surprise, he was informed, that the abbot of St. Denys was come to Provins. It was a visit to the count, on business regarding his monastery. Abeillard thought the moment favourable; and should he be able to prevail on the count, to be his intercessor, he doubted little of the success of his scheme. In company of the prior he waited on Theobald: his request was, that he would petition the abbot to pardon the fault he had committed, by leaving his cell without permission, and

BOOK IV. that he would grant him leave to practise the life of a monk, in any retirement, which might be agreeable to him.

The abbot heard the proposal with attention; and he answered the count, that he was sorry it was not in his power immediately to comply with his request, but that he would lay it before the monks, who had accompanied him, and that, before night, the result of their opinions should be notified to him.—The confraternity assembled. It was very evident, they thought, that Abeillard's intention was to retire into some other convent; and would not this reflect dishonour on St. Denys? However much his conduct might be displeasing to them; he was a man of vast erudition, raised to the highest pitch of literary glory; was admired by the world, and must be considered as a jewel of immense value, which they could not surrender into other hands. When he had taken the resolution of quitting the world, it was St. Denys he had preferred to every other monastic establishment.—They therefore unanimously resolved not to comply with his requisition; and the same was made known to the count of Champagne. They went further: on the spot, it was signified to Abeillard that, if he did not forthwith return to St. Denys, they should issue a sentence of excommunication against him; and, at the same time, the honest prior, his protector, was very solemnly threatened, that a like censure should fall on him also, if he dared to retain Abeillard any longer in his convent<sup>d</sup>.

The two friends felt the harsh impressions of this imperious mandate, but how could it be opposed?—The abbot, with his monks, returned; and, in a few days, news was brought

<sup>c</sup> Hist. Calam.

<sup>d</sup> Ibid.

brought that heaven had called him to a country, where abbots surrender the ensigns of their dignity, and the humble monk is compelled to obey no longer.

Suger, a name of high renown in the annals of French history, was chosen successor to Adam, in the abbacial honours of St. Denys. He had entered very young into the conventual profession, had been educated, in company with Lewis, son to Philip the first, in the convent of St. Denys; and when the prince came to the throne in 1108, he was called to court, where he became the friend and the counsellor of his master. At this time, he was absent from the kingdom, on an embassy to Callixtus the second, pope of Rome, and was returning home, when a messenger from St. Denys informed him, that his abbot was dead, and that he was chosen to succeed him<sup>c</sup>.

Abeillard was delighted with the news of this promotion: he could look for every indulgence from the liberal and beneficent character of Suger. The bishop of Meaux had also declared himself his friend, and with him he waited in person on the new abbot. They expressed their sincere congratulations on the occasion; and then Abeillard presented the same petition, which had been before rejected. Suger, though a man of the world and condescending in his dispositions, was not, however, blind to what he deemed the interest of his abbey. The proposal made to him he could not comply with; he saw it in the light it had appeared to others: but he obligingly permitted his petitioner to return to Provins, requesting he would revolve the important matter more seriously in his mind, and that he would not think

<sup>c</sup> Fleury vol. xiv.

BOOK IV. was then the post of the greatest honour and power in the French court, comprising in itself, what were afterwards the distinct offices of grand master of the household and of constable. Stephen wore his high honours with splendour; but he wanted sense and moderation to rein his ambition and the native pride of his heart. So great was the ascendancy he held over his master's dispositions, that it was sometimes said that Stephen, rather than Lewis, wielded the sceptre of France. With too much appearance of sovereignty, he aimed to extend this controul also, over the queen his mistress. She opposed his wild pretensions; when the intoxicated favourite, who no longer prescribed limits to his insolence, dared publicly to insult her. He did not reflect, that an irritated woman is a dangerous enemy.

Adelaide watched the favourable moment, and represented to the king, “ that Stephen, the proud minister of  
“ his court, was become intolerable to the nobles of his  
“ realm, and that the people, worn down by his oppress-  
“ sions, would submit no longer; that to behold an eccle-  
“ siastic, sometimes at the head of armies, and then dis-  
“ charging the civil offices of the state, was a circumstance  
“ which raised general scandal and disgust; that she herself  
“ could not brook his haughty and insultive demeanour;  
“ and that to her husband she must now fly for protection  
“ against the tyranny of a man, who could, at every mo-  
“ ment, forget the duties, he owed to her rank and dig-  
“ nity; but that there was another circumstance, which  
“ came nearer to her heart than all this: Lewis, conti-  
“ nued she, in the favours you shower down upon de Gar-  
“ lande, you forget yourself: are you sensible that the  
“ prince,

“ prince, who delegates his essential prerogatives to a minister, tears from his own brow that sacred character, which gives him respect in the eye of the multitude.”—The forcible address had its desired effect. The king sent an order to de Garlande instantly to surrender into his hands all the insignia of office, and to retire from court.

He did retire; but he refused to resign his charge of Seneschal, which was become hereditary, he said, in his family, and he flew to arms. In a moment the kingdom was in a ferment; Stephen rode from province to province, and thousands joined his standard. De Montfort, who had married his niece, pressed the king to reinstate him in his honours; but in vain. Henry of England engaged in the quarrel, and Theobald of Champagne was on his march to succour the fallen favourite. However, the good fortune of Lewis prevailed, and de Garlande was reduced to submission. The queen, alarmed by the troubles, which innocently she had excited, interceded for peace. Some time after, Stephen was again taken into favour, and new honours were conferred upon him. Thus, in the tranquil enjoyment of dignity, he spent some years, when he retired voluntarily from the scene, and died dean of the chapter of Orleans, the mitre of which he had refused<sup>b</sup>.

It was but a dreary prospect, which Abeillard had before him, when, agreeably to the conditions he had signed, he left St. Denys. He was poor; and was he sure he should find friends who would be disposed to relieve him? Penury, however, he considered, with all its attendant evils, was far preferable to the disgusting enormities of the abbey,

he

Abeillard retires into the forest of Nogent.

<sup>b</sup> Daniel t. iii. Vie d'Abeil. p. 222.

BOOK IV. he had left behind him; and having experienced how little his dispositions were calculated to coalesce with folly, and how many were the torments, which society supplied, his mind began to warm with the reflection, and he flattered himself that the happiness, perhaps, which hitherto he had sought for in vain, might be found at a distance from the habitations of men. Thus pensively he pursued his journey.

As formerly he had wandered through the forests of Champagne, he had observed a spot, the recollection of which now returned upon his mind. It was a small sequestered vale, surrounded by a wood, not distant from Nogent sur Seine, and a rivulet ran near its side. It did not appear that the foot of any mortal had hitherto disturbed its solitude. To this place Abeillard hastened, and he spent his first night, as did the other tenants of the forest, protected only by the wide branches which spread over his head. Heloisa says, it was, at that time, the receptacle of wild beasts, and the retreat of robbers; that it had not seen the habitations of men, or known the charms of domestic life.<sup>i</sup>—He had one companion, who was an ecclesiastic.

Abeillard, delighted with the novelty of his situation, (for when the mind is warmed by a degree of enthusiasm, it can discover beauties in a wilderness,) waited on the owners of the land, and expressed to them his wishes of becoming an inhabitant of their woods. The undertaking was then no unusual thing; and they very freely gave their consent, and even made him a present of any extent of soil, he might chuse to occupy.—The philosopher returned, and had soon measured out the district, which could bound his desires.—

<sup>i</sup> Ep. Helois. 1<sup>a</sup>.

desires.—His next step was to apply to the bishop of Troyes, BOOK IV.  
in whose diocese his new possessions lay, for permission to build a small oratory. This likewise was granted.—Without loss of time, Abeillard then and his companion, planned the new building, and with the same hands began to erect it. The materials were not distant, nor was great skill required to put them together. They collected some bows of trees; these they tied with twigs; and the structure rose visibly into form before their eyes.—Having completed what they called their oratory, and solemnly dedicated it to the holy Trinity, to express his disapprobation of the unitarian system, which his enemies had also imputed to him, they constructed a second building, which was to be their own dwelling. This, it may be presumed, was not more highly finished than the temple they had dedicated to their maker<sup>k</sup>.

Seldom had Abeillard been more happy than at this busy moment. Free from anxious cares, his mind enjoyed the present object. It was not brilliant indeed; but it occupied him. He had escaped from troubles; the voice of malevolence sounded no longer in his ears; and persecution ceased to oppress him. It was the situation of a weary traveller, who, at the end of his journey, lays down his heavy burden, and feels contented, because the load, which pressed him to the earth, is taken from his shoulders.—Abeillard rose with the sun to adore his maker; he thanked him for the repose he enjoyed, and he lamented the follies of his life. The day he spent in study, or in conversation with his friend, to whom he recounted the adventures and the perils he had gone through. The water of the brook allayed

<sup>k</sup> Hist. Calam.

BOOK IV. his thirst, and of the very scanty provisions, which the forests of Champagne could supply, he made his meal. With the birds, which sang round him, he retired to rest; and he laid his head down on the turf, careless and undisturbed.—A mind, like his, could not indeed circumscribe itself within the precincts of his lonely habitation: it would range the ideal world; enter there into active scenes; and sometimes perhaps be pleased with the prospect of future honours and renown. But foresee he could not, that this career of glory was ready to open in the very wilderness, which seemed to have put an eternal bar to the familiar intercourse of mortals.

He is visited  
in the forest,  
and again  
begins to  
teach.

When it was publicly known, that Abeillard was again an independent man, and had seceded entirely from the world, the lovers of science, and many who had before been his scholars, enquired anxiously for his abode, resolved, could the learned solitary be discovered, to put themselves under his tuition, and once more to draw science from his lips. Their search was soon crowned with success: they found him situated, as I have described, in the forest near Nogent; and they opened their wishes to him.—Abeillard in vain resisted; he saw every avenue to his hermitage filling with young men, and crowds were round him, before he had time to take the advice of friends, or to consult the feelings of his own heart. The step could not at first seem pleasing, unless already the pure delights of solitude had begun to pall upon his mind. With one voice they requested, he would again become their master. He shewed them his humble cell, the oratory he had raised, and he pointed to the wilderness, which their eager steps had just penetrated.

“ Your



“ Your propofal, faid he to them, is inconfiderate. I can  
 “ but applaud your thirft after knowledge; and the choice  
 “ you make of me for an inftuctor, is truly flattering. But  
 “ you forget yourfelves. In a moment, this dreary spot  
 “ will teach you, that fcience, without the conveniences  
 “ of life, is not worth purfuing<sup>1</sup>.”—His remonftrance was  
 to little purpofe: when the mind is ftrongly bent to an  
 object, the view of ordinary difficulties does but animate its  
 exertions.

“ If want of conveniences, faid they, be the obftacle  
 “ which ftands in our way, we will foon remove it.”—An  
 extraordinary and interefting fcene now commenced. They  
 looked round them; when, after a fhort conference, it  
 was determined that, in imitation of Abeillard, they fhould  
 become their own architects, and provide, in the firft place,  
 againft the inclemencies of the air. Their mafter’s cell gave  
 the general plan. They tore down branches from the trees,  
 and they twifted the pliant twigs. In a few hours the bufi-  
 nefs was nearly completed.—Abeillard viewed, with infinite  
 fatisfaction, the bufy fcene; his approbation gave frefh life  
 to their exertions; and it was no longer poffible he could  
 refufe his affent to a petition, which was pronounced with  
 fuch unqueftionable marks of fincerity<sup>m</sup>.

He came forward: they read confent in his looks: “ With  
 “ to-morrow’s fun, faid he, I will meet you under yon fspread-  
 “ ing tree, and with the bleffing of heaven on my endea-  
 “ vours, what inftructions it may be in my power to give  
 “ you, you fhall freely receive from me.” They heard his  
 words with general acclamations.

<sup>1</sup> Hift. Calam.

<sup>m</sup> Vie d’Abeil. 233.

## BOOK IV.

The wants of nature now called for attention ; but when the mind, engrossed with its own thoughts, retires in upon itself, these calls are easily satisfied. They, whom the luxurious tables of Paris could hardly gratify, now sat down to roots, and they found them savoury. The oaten cake had a relish, which they had not experienced in the ortolan. Their beds were made of dry weeds, or of the leaves which had fallen from the trees<sup>n</sup>.—Thus did this new tribe of philosophers prepare themselves for the approach of wisdom : the academic grove was truly seen to rise again, and never had the ancient sages, on whose praises history dwells with wonder, fought for truth with more ardent enquiries.—Abeillard pronounced his first lecture : it was from the foot of the tree, I mentioned : his hearers were seated round ; for they had made themselves benches of bows, and had raised the green turf into tables<sup>o</sup>.

I have before remarked how extraordinary was this thirst after knowledge, which, with a degree of enthusiasm, of which we can form no idea, spread itself over the states of Europe. But nothing can mark more strongly the fallen condition of literature. When learned men are common, and learning itself is very generally diffused, not only the means of acquiring it are at hand, but there is also no novelty in the pursuit, calculated to excite peculiar energy and to rouse the passions. In the times I am describing, a learned man was a phenomenon ; and who can be surprised that he should have been viewed with wonder ? What is rare is highly prized ; and what we prize is fought for, sometimes with an eagerness which astonishes cooler minds, and  
before

<sup>n</sup> Hist. Calam.

<sup>o</sup> Ibid.

before which obstacles either vanish, or only serve to give an additional spring to exertions.—The scarcity of books, before the invention of printing, was likewise another principal circumstance, which, as it circumscribed the spread of learning, so did it render those, who, surmounting every impediment, attained it, objects of greater admiration. BOOK IV.

Before the end of the first year, the number of Abeillard's scholars exceeded six hundred, situated in a forest, such as I have described, exposed to the inclement seasons, without a single convenience to smooth the rugged life, or without one amusement, excepting what literary pursuits, scientific conversation, and their own society could supply.—The subjects they discussed were either philosophical or religious, to which Abeillard added dissertations on the moral and social duties, which he could enliven by the brilliancy of his imagination, and by anecdotes drawn from sacred and profane history. But it matters little, as I have elsewhere observed, what our pursuits be, provided they excite attention, and we place our interest in them.—The compositions indeed of Abeillard I can read with little pleasure; they are jejune, intricate, and inelegant; and to me such would have been his lectures. I could not have inhabited the Champagne forests, nor have travelled in quest of such literary lore; and my European contemporaries will not dissent from me: but this only shews that, with circumstances, our dispositions vary, and that nothing can be more irrational, than to measure by the same standard, the notions and characters of two ages so remote, as this and the twelfth century.

Abeillard,

BOOK IV. Abeillard, as it may be collected from his memoirs, at their hours of recreation, talked to his scholars of the ancient philosophers; he told them how these sages lived; he recounted the purity of their manners, and the eminence of their virtues: he turned to the sacred volumes, which relate the lives of the sons of the prophets; and here he found men who, near the waters of Jordan, had emulated the perfection of angels. With rapture he dwelt on the more than mortal virtues of the Baptist, and he followed the first converts to christianity through their exemplary course of self-abasement, of prayer, of recollection, and of temperance. With these splendid epochs he compared the present day. They listened with complacency. In Abeillard they saw the divine Plato: and in themselves that illustrious group of disciples, which had given renown to the academic walks of Athens.

But the serenity of the sky began to cloud over. His enemies heard, with indignation, of the success of his labours, and of the new honours which attended him in the wilderness. Should this be unopposed; in what could it terminate, but in their own disgrace, and in the further exaltation of Abeillard? Impatiently they looked to some event, which, from the character of their rival, or in the probable course of things, could not, they trusted, be very distant: this they would seize, and once more attempt his downfall.

He builds the  
Paraclet.

In the mean while, this learned colony daily increased and prospered more. But as the first enthusiasm abated, they could feel more sensibly the inconveniences, to which the inhospitable situation exposed them: these they now wished

wished to remove, and to bring round them some few, at least, of the comforts of domestic life. They wanted not means, if they would turn them to advantage; and they could even command what sums of money might be necessary, if expence were called for. Their master was destitute of every thing; and for the intellectual treasures he supplied, were they to make no return? Necessaries, at least, their own hands could give him: they improved his cell, they tilled his field, they dressed his victuals, and they clothed him.—“ My penury, says he of himself, was at that time extreme: but I could not dig, and to beg I was ashamed. Recurring therefore to the profession, I best understood, I made my tongue execute, what my hands were unfit for<sup>p</sup>. ”

They then undertook to enlarge their place of worship; and they proposed doing it, on a more improved and permanent plan. Stones and timber were prepared; and from these they erected a building, inelegant indeed, but firm and respectable. The first humble structure, as I mentioned, was dedicated to the sacred Trinity. Now, in solemn ceremony, Abeillard and his disciples assembled: he explained to them the motives, which had induced him to prefer that mysterious name; and he added that, as he had entered this desert, sunk down with care, where the goodness of heaven had watched over him, and he had found comfort, could he more emphatically express his gratitude, than by consecrating this more august temple to that person of the holy triad, which more peculiarly is stiled the Comforter? “ We will dedicate it, said he, to the *Paraclet*<sup>q</sup>. ”

<sup>p</sup> Hist. Calam.

<sup>q</sup> Ibid.

## BOOK IV.

The circumstances of this event, Heloisa thus relates ;  
 “ On the very dens of wild beasts, and on the lurking holes  
 “ of thieves, where the name of God had not been heard,  
 “ you raised a temple to his name, and you consecrated it  
 “ to his holy spirit. To this the donations of kings or  
 “ princes did not contribute ; you wanted not their aid.  
 “ From all quarters, an almost infinite number of scholars  
 “ crowded to be instructed by you. They supplied what-  
 “ ever was necessary. Even churchmen, who had been  
 “ used to live on the donations of others, whose hands were  
 “ ever open to receive, but not to give, became here pro-  
 “ fuse ; they were importunate in their contributions<sup>r</sup>.”

Great offence was taken by the zealots, when it was known, that Abeillard had dedicated his oratory to the Paraclet. It had not been heard, that any building had hitherto been put under the protection of that mysterious spirit. The Reimish professors were particularly loud : but it was a circumstance, they thought, which, if properly managed, might be turned to advantage.—When nothing seriously reprehensible, in the conduct or the belief of an adversary, can be detected, the merest trifle will be made matter of censure ; especially any novelty in opinion or language will be noticed as a crime, on which malevolence, with wonderful rancour, will love to fasten.—A church, these wise casuists sagaciously observed, might be dedicated to the Son or to the Holy Trinity, but not to the Father, nor to the Holy Spirit.—Abeillard, who should have smiled at the puerile nonsense, seemed seriously affected : he knew indeed the temper of his adversaries, and he very gravely under-  
 took

<sup>r</sup> Ep. Helois. 1<sup>a</sup>.

took to justify what he had done, by arguments from scripture and reason.—To reason with such men was telling them that their observations merited notice: they would only repeat them with more inveteracy: ridicule is sometimes the best test of truth.

But the professors, it seems, were rather conscious of some weakness: they did not chuse to expose themselves alone in a controversy, which might require more than their own address to give it consequence: they had recourse to foreign aid. “Sensible, says Abeillard, that their own powers could not go far, they took care to instigate against me two new apostles, in whom the world then much confided. The one boasted that he had revived the spirit of the ancient canons; and the other that of the monks. These men, roaming about the earth, by their impudent invectives, rendered me contemptible in the eyes not only of the ecclesiastical, but also of some secular powers. The reports, they circulated, of my conduct and religious tenets, alienated the affections of my best friends; and the few, who still retained the smallest kindness for me, awed by the names of my opponents, judged it best to conceal their sentiments.”—The one of these was Norbert of Premontre, and the other the famous Bernard of Clairvaux.

St. Norbert, descended from an illustrious German family, was born in the dutchy of Cleves. When young, he was called to the court of the emperor, Henry the fifth, his relation. Here, the elegance of his manners, the affability of his temper, and the general charms of his deportment, gained

Norbert of  
Premontre.

<sup>1</sup> Hist. Calam.

Z

him

BOOK IV. him uncommon admiration. But what contributed to fashion his exterior, insensibly corrupted his heart: he became dissipated and licentious. The danger, to which his life was, one day, exposed from a violent storm of thunder, roused him to reflection: he withdrew from the court, resigned his employments, sold his estates, and distributed his riches among the poor. Thus disengaged from every tie, which united him to the world, he began a severe course of penance: but the mortifications he thought expedient for himself, he wished to inculcate to others. He preached to the neighbouring people; from them he carried his instructions to more distant provinces, and the success which attended his labours was great. His scheme of introducing a general reform, particularly among churchmen, was violently opposed: he met enemies at every step.

In 1118 he waited on pope Gelafius, who was in France, from whom he obtained an unbounded permission to preach, such as had been granted to Robert d'Arbriffelles. Two years afterwards he was prevailed on to make some stay at Laon, by his friend, the bishop of that city. He offered him for his retreat a neighbouring valley. Norbert was delighted with the solitary spot: it was called *Premontre*: and here he laid the foundation of that reformed order, which has taken its name from the vale. The cares of his rising family did not however confine him at home; he continued his former preaching, and travelled much<sup>t</sup>.—At this period it was that, instigated by the misrepresentations of the enemies of Abeillard, he made the philosopher, with whom he was not particularly acquainted, a subject of public reprehension<sup>7</sup>

The

<sup>t</sup> Fleury vol. xiv.



The zeal of good men is often too irritable. Norbert was not very learned, and he would easily be imposed on by such men as Albericus and Lotulphus.—The wandering saint, in 1126, was chosen archbishop of Magdebourg. BOOK IV.

Bernard, the restorer of monastic discipline in the Western church, the engine, which gave life and energy to the religion and politics of Europe, the thaumatargus of the twelfth century, was born, in 1091, near Dijon, in Burgundy, of an ancient and noble family. His mother, agreeably to the romantic piety of the age, awed by a dream, devoted him, in a particular manner, to the service of God, whilst she bore him in her womb. He was the third of six sons. Nature had endowed him with uncommon abilities, and his education was fitted to his high destination. He loved retirement, he reflected much, and he spoke little, at a time, when youth is most forward and exuberant. He was simple in his manners, mild in conversation, and modest as angelic innocence. The beauty of his person accorded with the elegance of his mind: there was a harmony in his voice which captivated, his language was perspicuous, and eloquence, in sweetest accents fell, like honey, from his lips.—He entered the world, and every object seemed to smile at his appearance: ambition, science, pleasure, at once laid their charms at his feet. But Bernard could not be seduced. The world he saw was a perilous ocean; and so peculiar was his cast of mind, that vice, in whatever form it presented itself, only struck him with horror. Very soon the placid current of his thoughts was ruffled: in vain he strove to oppose the dissipation which, at every turn, met his eye; the counteraction of his soul was vehement; and

Bernard of  
Clairvaux.

BOOK IV. he felt an enthusiasm stir within him, to which, till now, he had been a stranger.

The pleasing emotion, which this dangerous passion excites, has a thousand charms; because though it pictures vice in the most horrid and disgusting forms, it, at the same time, represents virtue with every alluring feature: religion seems to hold before it its most exclusive blessings, and heaven, in all its glories, bursts upon the sight. But as the passions, which are stiled the springs of life, are only serviceable, so long as they continue under the check of reason, and are ever, from their natural tendency, running to excess; so is religious enthusiasm of all passions the most dangerous: it takes its rise in excess, and is only ruled by impulse: it begins by hating vice, and soon carries its hatred to the vicious; to itself it takes the rewards of virtue and the promises of revelation, and to others it extends the judgments of heaven in this life, and its vindictive punishments in the next.—Bernard resolved to turn his back on a world, which only gave him disgust, and which he could not reform.

Citeaux, in Burgundy, the first monastery of the Cistercian order, had been founded fifteen years: but the rule they had adopted was so severe, that very few had yet chosen to submit themselves to its austerities. It was to this institute that young Bernard turned his eyes: its rigid discipline seemed to harmonise with the state of his mind. His friends strenuously opposed the design, and they endeavoured to avert his attention. It was in vain: enthusiasm is not conquered by opposition. Rather his resolution daily gained strength: the call of heaven seemed to sound in his ears,  
and

and to charge him with indolence.—More than once he had experienced the efficacy of his own oratory, and he might suspect that the religious glow, which animated his own heart, could be communicated to others. In his design he was irrevocably fixed; but if he could take his friends along with him, it would be a glorious atchievement, and the sacrifice to heaven would be more complete. He undertook it, and succeeded.

BOOK IV.

Awed into submission by a persuasive strain of eloquence, which was irresistible, to the aid of which he, at every turn, called heaven and its judgments, four of his brothers joined him in his undertaking; and very soon the number of his followers encreased to thirty. This powerful reinforcement he conducted to Citeaux.—Bernard was, at this time, in his twenty-second year.

As he had withdrawn from the world, to be forgotten by it, and to bury himself in solitude; his first step was to banish every sentiment, which could tie him to society or to the earth. The mastery he acquired over his senses was astonishing: absorbed in the contemplation of heavenly things, he rose above the impressions of matter, and was truly a spiritual man. Having never indulged his passions, they could have no sway over him: he only ate to support nature, and he slept, when his head, through lassitude, sank to the earth. To such incessant austerities the delicacy of his constitution gave way: like to a flower, cut by the mower's scythe, his health languished, his beauty withered, and he seemed to bend to the grave. But the vigour of his mind abated not, and the fervour of his devotion only grew into

BOOK IV. into greater animation. It was necessary to check this ardent career, and the authority of superiors interposed.

In 1115, Clairvaux was founded, and Bernard, tho' but beginning the second year of his religious life, was nominated abbot. His brothers went along with him. In this new post, where example was necessary to animate his followers, the young abbot exhibited fresh instances of his unbounded fervour. Clairvaux was a barren spot: the monks laboured, and tilled its surface, but it only returned weeds, or a few weak and insipid vegetables. On these they lived. Bernard, in the retirement of his cell, conversed with angels: when he came out among his brethren, a heavenly brightness appeared to radiate from his countenance; he spoke of things, which they did not comprehend; and when he prescribed rules of conduct, or descanted on religious perfection, it seemed that he had forgotten, that his hearers were mortal. They listened with amazement; they admired his maxims; but they felt their weakness, and could only wish to practise what he taught.

As the fame of his sanctity spread, he was visited from all quarters, and the silence of his retirement was broken. The affairs of his convent also, and sometimes the concerns of others, drew him into the world. Wherever he went, curiosity assembled thousands round him. He preached to them, laying before them the delights of solitude; and he returned to his cell, followed by innumerable proselytes, whom his eloquence had converted.—Now it was, as his historians relate, that nature began to be obedient to his voice; and the number of miracles, he is said to have worked, are recorded by them with veneration and astonishment.

I am

I am ready to believe that Bernard, whom his disciples and the multitude viewed as a prodigy, and as the peculiar friend of heaven, might be very capable of producing such effects, as, at that time particularly, would be necessarily construed into miraculous operations. It can be denied by no one, who has attended to man; who knows the texture of his frame, the influence of circumstances, and the powers of imagination.—I must likewise grant, that he, to whose beck nature and nature's laws are ever obedient, can, when it pleases him, suspend their operation, or modify their effects. This, at all times, he has done: and who shall say, that he has ceased from doing it?—But when critically we examine the prodigies, ascribed to Bernard and other holy men, at these times of cimmerician darkness; can we, consistently with the notions, which modern discoveries and the improved state of science suggest, attribute them to a real preternatural agency? Had many of them happened, just as they are told, still, I think, they might, on philosophical principles, be accounted for; but it is evident, that their relaters viewed them as wonders, and recorded them as such. An historian, under such impressions, would be too much disposed, even unintentionally, to depart from the simplicity of honest narration.

Ignorance, or a heated imagination, which would deceive the incautious spectator, might also impose on him, who should consider himself as the minister of omnipotence. Bernard, for instance, had heard of the miracles, which his predecessors or his contemporaries in sanctity had worked, and he had believed them: in similar circumstances, an unusual impulse would seem to move within him, and he would

BOOK IV. would think divine providence was preparing to make use of him as an instrument, of his mercies or of his judgments to man. Such a sentiment would, by no means, be inconsistent with the most perfect piety and self-abasement.—But is it credible that he, who, in infinite wisdom established his eternal laws on the fitness and universal relation of things, would subvert the divine harmony of his system, unless a crisis, worthy of it, should intervene? I do not find this crisis in the vulgar history of the miracles of the dark ages.

When a new religion, such as the christian, was to be founded or propagated, extraordinary means would be sometimes necessary. Incredulity, rivetted on habits and the strong opposition of inveterate prejudices, was to be surmounted; and it was expedient that the mission of him, who delivered a new and unheard of doctrine, should be established on an authority, which nothing might controvert.—In the times of Bernard, was there an object, like this, in agitation? Or rather, is not he said to have worked miracles, the general importance of which cannot be discovered; for they regard private interests, personal views, and sometimes, it appears, rather unimportant matters.—A man of family and his relation had suddenly lost his speech and his recollection. His friends were afflicted, that he should die without confession and the rites of the church, and they came to Bernard. The saint assured them that, if satisfaction were made to the church and the poor, which the nobleman had pillaged and oppressed, he should recover, and be in a situation to confess his sins. They agreed to the conditions. Bernard then fell on his knees; when news was brought him, that the sick man had recovered his speech.

He

He then made his confession to the faint, performed other works of piety, and died after three days<sup>u</sup>.—Let this miracle, which was wonderfully celebrated, as the first which the faint worked, be tried by the received canons of impartial criticism. BOOK IV,

It is remarkable that, in proportion as the clouds of ignorance have dispersed, as science has diffused its benign influence, and as religion has been purified from the base alloy of human opinions, those portentous events have ceased to happen. The circumstance, it must be owned, is not favourable to the credit of our pious ancestors. Why should providence withhold his preternatural interference at a time, mankind is best able to appreciate the wondrous system of his ways, and would be most disposed to honour them? Ignorance, superstition, bigotry, and enthusiasm, have, most clearly, attended the progress of miraculous operations, through that long series of years, when their appearance was thought to be most frequent.—Many, I know, of those events might, in a certain sense, be termed miraculous, because they exceeded the powers of nature, as these were then understood. Carry back into the twelfth century, the astonishing effects of animal magnetism, or the resuscitations, which almost daily take place, of persons apparently dead by drowning or suffocation, what astonishment would be excited! Ignorant of such causes which, in the regular course of things, could produce the effect; to what could they have recourse but to preternatural agency? And they would be justified in the judgment, they might form. On us it is incumbent to be more cautious:

<sup>u</sup> Fleury vol. xiv.

BOOK IV. with the accuracy of inquiry we weigh modern events, proportioning causes to effects, we should measure those of our more credulous, because less informed, ancestors.

The author of miracles is likewise the author of nature : nor is he more admirable, when he departs from established order, than when, uniformly omnipotent, he conducts, with unerring rectitude, the vast system of the universe. The general ways of providence are to me more awful and sublime, because they proceed on plans, which infinite wisdom projected and supports: but in miraculous events, which to us are deordinations, that same providence, out of compassion to human weakness, descends from his sphere of incomprehensible greatness, and deigns to speak to our senses a language, which may over-awe reason, and command an involuntary assent. Had man been more perfect than he is, the intervention of miracles would have been unnecessary: they are no compliment to the powers of human intellect.

It was, when the reputation of Bernard was high, and he began to draw himself from solitude into public observation, that Abeillard, whose character and habits of thinking had been unfairly represented, became an object of his censure. Bernard was incautiously betrayed into a vehement animosity, which is hardly reconcileable with the upright dispositions of his mind: means therefore must have been used as imposing, as they were ungenerous. The prejudice, he imbibed against him, sank deep in his heart, as will be seen in the continuation of my history.

Abeillard,



Abeillard, whom the news of this powerful confederation struck with amazement, saw the danger, to which he was exposed. His heart sank within him: "God is my witness," says he, as often as I was told of any ecclesiastical meeting, I conceived it was assembled against me; and in trepidation I waited the summons, which would drag me to their bar<sup>v</sup>."—The remembrance of Soissons haunted his recollection, and as he wanted fortitude to withstand the impression, he fell, like a broken reed, before it. In despair he meditated the wildest plans: he would retire, he thought, from the confines of the christian world; he would seek refuge among the disciples of Mahomet; where, under the stipulation of such a tribute, as they should please to impose, he should be at liberty, he trusted, to lead the life of a christian amongst the enemies of Christ. When they should hear, that he had been accused of holding opinions, adverse to christianity, they might be inclined, he thought, to treat him more gently; they might even imagine, he could be profelyted to their belief<sup>w</sup>.

Lost in these desponding thoughts, he indulged the romantic wish of expatriating himself for ever: the Paraclet could no longer give him pleasure; he suspended his lessons, his scholars in part withdrew, and nothing but desolation and the horrors of the wilderness rose in prospect before him. But unexpectedly an event took place, which promised, if not thoroughly to alleviate his misfortunes, at least to break the dark cloud, which lowered round him. When anxiety presses, or pain, of whatever description, makes life uneasy, the most trifling variation gives relief.

<sup>v</sup> Hist. Calam.

<sup>w</sup> Ibid.

BOOK IV. There was in Little Britany a monastery, of very ancient renown, founded, as it is said, in the fifth century, by Gildas our countryman, in the reign of king Childeric, the son of Meroveus\*. It was called St. Gildas de Ruys; and the abbot was lately dead. Abeillard, by the unanimous voice of the monks, was chosen superior of this house, and the duke of Britany gave his warmest approbation to their choice. The philosopher, a native of the province, would be naturally admired by his countrymen, and they would wish to possess him. A messenger was sent to St. Denys to beg the consent of Suger, to whom Abeillard still belonged: his consent was easily obtained. The deputy then proceeded into Champagne, where he found Abeillard in his retirement, abashed and melancholy, and he laid before him the letters of his promotion, which he had brought from St. Gildas. The philosopher perused them with the indifference of a man, who was neither flattered by the proffered honours, nor could augur much happiness to himself in the event. He paused: his present heart-breaking situation was to be weighed against the uncertainty of future prospects.—Should he retire from the Paraclet; the persecutions, which again threatened him, would cease perhaps, and he might be happy: but the land, to which he was called, was almost barbarous, and their language was unknown to him: besides, report had told him, that the monks of St. Gildas were dissipated and undisciplined; and how much had he not suffered from this circumstance in the abbey of St. Denys? But he who sees a naked dagger, suspended by a hair over his head, would rush into a precipice to avoid its point.—

\* Notæ Quercet.

point.—In a more favourable view; was not command offered him? And might he not be able, by the exertion of it, to repress the bad conduct of his monks, and to establish his own authority? They might also be inclined to respect his learning, his virtue, and his renown.—The last reflection preponderated, and he answered the messenger, that he was ready to accompany him into Britany<sup>y</sup>. Still, his heart was heavy: he left the Paraclet, committing it to the care of two intimate friends.

Abeillard soon was sensible how imprudently he had made his choice. He found St. Gildas in a state of depravation, of which no idea could have been formed; and he was more than surpris'd, that they should ever have fixed on him for their superior. Their general language was the harsh jargon of the country; and he knew not how to make them sensible of the enormities of their lives, or of his design to reform them. The obligations of his charge were however pressing; and though he foresaw the anxiety and dangers, to which it would expose him, he determin'd not to neglect his duty. As well might he have attempted to preach virtue to a band of lawless robbers.—In aggravation to all this, the lord of the territory, a man of considerable power, availing himself of the notorious conduct of the monks, had not only contrived to subject the abbey to his controul, but had also seized such of their possessions, as pleas'd him best: the whole country groan'd under his exactions<sup>z</sup>.

To distress their abbot, whose schemes of reformation they abhorred, the monks importunately applied to him for clothing and other necessaries; though they knew he was destitute

<sup>y</sup> Hist. Calam.

<sup>z</sup> Ibid.

BOOK IV. destitute of every thing. Hitherto they had made their own provisions; and out of the stock, they could steal or lay by, had contrived to support themselves, their concubines, and their sons and daughters. More than ever they were now active to pilfer the common store, that Abeillard, finding it impossible to satisfy their wants, might be forced to withdraw himself from amongst them, or to drop his tasteless scheme of reformation<sup>a</sup>.

This situation of Abeillard was really more distressful, than any he had hitherto experienced. When he looked round him, he says, he could discover nothing but a most barbarous and lawless people, from whom nor assistance, nor advice, could be expected; their notions and habits of life were in direct opposition to his own. If he quitted the door of his convent, the tyrant, just mentioned, or his guards, met his eye; and their gestures told him that he was their slave. If he returned home; there was a worse enemy waiting within, whose intemperate clamours sounded, like the shrieks of discord, in his ears. He viewed the harsh decrees of fate, which, with an accelerated force, seemed to weigh upon him; and if, in rueful despondency, he lamented, we must now forgive him. He recollected that, on former occasions, he might have given some cause for oppression; but that now he was guiltless: he recollected that, hitherto it had been at least in his power to do some good by example or instruction, and therein comfort might be found; but that now every exertion was as useless to himself, as it was to others: he recollected all the reposeful moments of the Paraclet, and in the recollection his mind was too  
sedulous

<sup>a</sup> Hist. Calam.

fedulous to omit every care, which had really disturbed their serenity. "And could I leave the Paraclet, exclaimed he, that is, the comforter, to rush into certain misery? "I was threatened indeed; but must I run from threats, "when dangers, I knew, would inevitably overtake me at "every step<sup>b</sup>!" Nor was he a little hurt, that he should have left his dear oratory in so neglected a state; that he had not provided for the due celebration of divine service: but what could he do, who was poor? Or could a wilderness make up the deficiencies of penury?

At this time, Suger, abbot of St. Denys, whose power was great in the court of Lewis the sixth, thinking the moment favourable for the completion of a scheme, which he had for some time agitated, assembled the chapter of his convent, and laid his design before them. He had discovered in some old writings of his abbey, that Argenteuil, where Heloise, as the reader will recollect, resided, belonged in strict justice to St. Denys. This right he resolved to urge, whilst he had power in his hands, which could give it efficacy. The chapter applauded his design. Without delay deputies were sent to Rome, vested with ample authority, and they carried with them such papers, as were requisite, to establish the ground of their pretensions.—In addition to this right, which was weak in itself, and by prescription obsolete<sup>c</sup>, Suger was in possession of another plea, in which probably he confided most. The nuns of Argenteuil, if there be truth in his representation, were dissolute and worldly-minded: this circumstance, with all the glow of description, was to be laid before the Roman pontiff. Could he

Argenteuil is taken from the nuns.

<sup>b</sup> Hist. Calam.

<sup>c</sup> Notæ Quercet.

BOOK IV. he obtain his request, he assured Honorius, that, where vice and dissipation now prevailed, he would introduce, with his monks, a system of reform, which should do honour to the monastic institute.—It is remarkable that Suger, who could not be ignorant of the enormities, with which his own house was charged, should have the effrontery to insist on arguments, which must necessarily bring reprehension on himself. The negotiation however succeeded, and Argenteuil, with all its appendages, was solemnly made over to the abbey of St. Denys. The king, whom Suger calls his master and his friend, confirmed the donation about the year 1127<sup>d</sup>.

Heloisa was prioress, that is, second in office, when this unpleasant event happened. I am willing to hope, though she was involved in the general accusation, that she was innocent of the crimes, with which Argenteuil was charged. Abeillard relates the fact, I have mentioned; but he only speaks of the pretended right, on which Suger founded his claim. Nor do I think that, either love for Heloisa, or a general feeling for her sisters, would have withheld his pen, had he known them to be guilty in the degree some historians represent: they take their accounts from Suger.

The lovely prioress had been seven years in confinement: to the historian they are seven years of silence. His imagination, indeed, is free to delineate her actions and her gentle turn of character, as fancy may direct; but had the regular series of her employments been minutely recorded, it would have afforded little indulgence to curiosity. The life of a nun is uniformly composed of a thousand little actions and

<sup>d</sup> Suger de reb. a se gest.

and trifling incidents; and the history of one day may be esteemed the history of her life. Heloisa, we may presume, wore away her days in prayer, in study, in conversation, in retirement: but if the conduct of the sisterhood was such, as Suger tells, the want of discipline would allow her more room for the indulgence of her own peculiar dispositions, and their excesses might disturb her little. She had entered Argenteuil, we know, with great reluctance, though in perfect submission to the will of Abeillard: if therefore her heart but slowly bent itself to the maxims of a recluse, it was but natural. Her fortitude was great; but the example, which surrounded her, was ill-adapted to prepare her soul for the ingress of divine grace, or rather perhaps of that amiable enthusiasm, which can give sweetness to solitude and to the many little practices, which form the tissue, and constitute the almost essential character of the monastic life.

It was in this house she had received the rudiments of those literary accomplishments, which, in a dark age, rendered her a prodigy of science. The same means would afterwards supply her more abundant occasions of improvement; and doubtless she availed herself of them. She had listless hours to fill up, she had anxious cares to remove, she had the unavailing thoughts of a lover to repress, and she had a heavy heart to cheer. It was well she could find any employment, which might answer these important ends, and which could occupy her attention. But the idea of Abeillard, as I shall have ample occasion to remark, had so modified her heart, that it seems to have been associated with the motion of every fibre, which composed it.

## BOOK IV.

Heloisa goes  
to the Para-  
clet.

Suger having obtained the grant, he so anxiously wished, (for Argenteuil was, at that time, a very opulent establishment,) was not slow in bringing it to execution. He sent a peremptory order to the nuns; commanding them to surrender their convent into his hands, and he signified to them the authorities, on which he proceeded. They refused to obey; when force was employed, and they were violently ejected<sup>e</sup>.—It is said, that Suger had signed an agreement, whereby he promised to provide for the support of the nuns: and part of the community, it is known, was received into a neighbouring convent<sup>f</sup>. But Heloisa, with a few companions, was thrown on the world, without succour and without friends.

Abeillard was at St. Gildas, forlorn as I described him, when he heard of this event. However selfish he might be, he could not but feel for the situation of Heloisa; and on his mind hung another thought, which would prompt him to be more active in her service. I have said, that he was much attached to the Paraclet, and that he lamented, he had been obliged to leave it in so neglected a condition. Now did an occasion present itself, when he might indulge his partiality for that place; and by succouring the distressed, he might perhaps also be able to raise it even to celebrity, and himself to inherit the glory, which belonged to the founders of convents. The idea pleased him: he left St. Gildas, and went over into Champagne<sup>g</sup>.

From thence he acquainted Heloisa of his intentions.—She who, since her retirement from the world, had heard nothing of him, but what fame had reported, received his invitation

<sup>e</sup> Hist. Calam.

<sup>f</sup> Notæ Quercet.

<sup>g</sup> Hist. Calam.



invitation to the Paraclet with rapture. How enchanting the reflection, that she was not forgotten by the man she loved; and that she should be succoured by him, when no other friend appeared, and the earth had not an asylum for her! In the thought were absorbed all her cares, and all the neglectful treatment of Abeillard. To her companions she communicated the joyful news: they acceded to her proposal, and immediately departed for the Paraclet.—In the number, which was eight, were Agnes and Agatha, two nieces of Abeillard<sup>h</sup>.

The reader may please his imagination, in picturing to himself the first interview betwixt Abeillard and Heloisa. No two persons, who had once been lovers, ever met in less accordant characters. He, cold as marble, stern from philosophy, sore from ill-usage, broken by affliction, and religious, because the hand of fate had made him so. His misfortunes had also preyed upon his cheek, and he was no more the airy, the handsome, the sprightly Abeillard, who had animated the gayest circles of Paris.—On the other hand, Heloisa, who was but yet in her eight-and-twentieth year, had lost little of her former charms: the veil had not disfigured her features, nor had retirement given any harshness to the tone of her mind: she was gentle as she had ever been, and what encroachments, either care, or years, or application had made, were at this moment compensated by the inward glow, which the sight of Abeillard excited, and which beamed upon her countenance, in every expression of joy, of gratitude, of benevolence, of love.—He shewed her the situation of the Paraclet, the cell where he had dwelt,

<sup>h</sup> Vie d'Abeil p. 274. Notæ Quercet.

BOOK IV. the other habitations which his scholars had constructed, and the temple they had raised. These, and whatever else, from the donations of his friends, he could call his own, in lands or other possessions, he made over to Heloisa, and he confirmed them to her and her successors, for ever, by a solemn donation<sup>i</sup>. She was then unanimously chosen abbess of the new establishment; and the little community, disposing of itself in the most commodious manner, entered on their various duties.

Abeillard viewed, with pleasure, this commencement of a rising family; and having exhorted them to piety, and to concord, and to the faithful observance of their rule, which was that of St. Bennet, as they had brought it from Argentueil, he took his leave, and returned to St. Gildas.

Great were the distresses, to which Heloisa and her sisters were, at first, exposed: they were poor, and the Paraclet could not supply them with the common necessities of life. Cheerfully, however, they submitted to their fate, and they practised, as they could, the duties of their profession, looking up to him for support, who nourishes the brood of the raven, which calls to him for food. Heloisa also, in the same submission of mind, drew additional consolation from every object, with which was joined the dear recollection of Abeillard. But soon their wants were relieved. The neighbouring people, whom the pious behaviour of the holy sisterhood edified, and whom their distresses moved to compassion, came in to their assistance<sup>k</sup>. Nor were they satisfied to administer a mere temporary relief: Milo, lord of Nogent, gave them three farms, and a considerable portion of land,

<sup>i</sup> Hist. Calam.

<sup>k</sup> Ibid.

land, which lay near to their inclosure; he also allowed them to cut down, in his forest, such-wood, as they might want for firing or for building. Soon after his niece professed herself a nun at the Paraclet, when Milo increased his benefactions, and granted them a right of fishery in the river, which ran near their convent.—To these donations others were added by the nobility of the country. Matilda, countess of Champagne, was particularly liberal; and even Lewis, king of France, would be numbered amongst their benefactors. The Paraclet was not then subject to his laws; but he granted the nuns permission to buy and sell in his dominions, without paying any duties to himself or successors, for ever<sup>1</sup>.—Such liberal and unsolicited contributions shew the character of the times.

“ In a single year, says Abeillard, they acquired greater  
“ possessions, than would have fallen into my hands, had I  
“ laboured a hundred on the spot<sup>m</sup>.” This good fortune he particularly ascribes to the powerful efficacy of female distresses. As nature has formed women weak, and little able to provide for their own wants, their petitions, he thinks, are more apt to move us; and their virtue, if suffering, is an object, which challenges the regard of God and men. “ But  
“ so many were the attractions, continues he, which, in  
“ the eyes of every beholder, divine providence gave to  
“ Heloisa, that bishops viewed her as a daughter, abbots as  
“ a sister, and the laity loved her as a mother. Her piety,  
“ her prudence, her patience, her gentleness of character,  
“ commanded universal admiration. Seldom she appeared  
“ in public; the retirement of her cell was better adapted  
“ to

<sup>1</sup> Quercet. ex Tab. Paraclet.

<sup>m</sup> Hist. Calam.

BOOK IV. “to holy meditation and to prayer: but her society was  
 “ardently sought for, and strangers wished to be improved  
 “by her edifying conversation.”

It is the delineation of a perfect character; but let it be observed, that this is the first time, that Abeillard has spoken of Heloisa and of her conduct, in terms of approbation. Her behaviour at the Paraclet must have pleased him well, and I conceive the portrait to be faithful. To praise too freely was not his disposition, and flattery, he seems, to have cautiously reserved for himself. Heloisa was as wax in his hands, and to all his inclinations she would mould her soul. When she saw that he was an altered man; that he was pious, reserved, meditative, and religiously severe, at once she adopted his maxims, and she appeared a finished pattern of monastic perfection. There were moments, I believe, when grace was not so triumphant: love and nature would sometimes prevail; and we shall see how reluctantly they surrendered a heart, which seemed made to be possessed by them alone.

Abeillard is  
 again cen-  
 sured.

Whilst the Paraclet was in distress, Abeillard had not neglected it. He was often informed of their situation, and was sometimes blamed by the gentlemen in the neighbourhood, that he did not sufficiently exert his abilities in their support: would he preach publicly, and declare their wants, there was little doubt, they said, of the most flattering success<sup>n</sup>. Repeatedly therefore he had gone over to them; and now when fortune began to smile, and the Paraclet attracted the notice of the charitable and the opulent, he did not discontinue his visits. How delightful to him was this spot,  
 which

<sup>n</sup> Hist. Calam.

which he had always loved ! But when he compared the gentle manners, the innocent conversation, the docile submission, and the attentive sollicitude of his nuns, with the boisterous and untoward deportment of the monks of St. Gildas, it was natural he should leave the Paraclet with regret, and should return to it with ardour. — He had projected a scheme, it seems, of passing much of his time with them: he would attend to the due administration of their temporal concerns, he would instruct, and he would edify them.

“ And since, says he, the incessant opposition of my own subjects became so insufferable, I thought, I could sometimes withdraw from the tumultuary scene, and breathe the serene air of this charming solitude. I should not be useless to them ; my presence even might be occasionally necessary.”

These visits of Abeillard to the Paraclet were soon noticed by his enemies. Innocent surely they were, and, in many regards, laudable ; but they could be misconstrued, and malevolence would not lose the satisfaction of indulging her favourite pursuit. “ The eunuch is not quite so insensible, as we imagined, said they: the trees, the brooks, the whispering zephyrs of the Paraclet are indeed charming, and Abeillard is charitable and humane; but since Heloisa has been there, we can hardly count his visits: may it be that Fulbert’s niece has yet some charms for the pious solitary ?”

The malicious insinuation reached the ears of Abeillard, and he was still too irritable to disregard it. Again he entered on a tedious exculpation of himself; and from ancient authorities

• Hist. Calam.

• Ibid.

BOOK IV. authorities undertook to prove, that such beings as himself were always accounted harmless. His fate, he thought, was peculiarly hard. But if the mere associating with women could be deemed criminal, not our Saviour, or his apostles, or the primitive fathers, should have escaped reprehension. It was from the example of Jerom only that he could derive consolation: he, like himself, had been defamed; why then should he murmur<sup>a</sup>.—His adversaries laughed at his defence, and only repeated their reflections. The disconsolate man could withstand them no longer; he sighed, and with a heavy heart, returned once more into Britany, resolved to submit to his cruel destiny, and to turn his back for ever on the fair inhabitants of the Paraclet<sup>r</sup>.

He settles at St. Gildas, and is persecuted by his monks.

To cheer, as far as might be, the melancholy hours, and that St. Gildas might not be the grave of his talents, as it was of his peace of mind, he undertook to discuss certain theological subjects, which were afterwards published, and of which I shall have occasion to speak.—The refractory monks persevered in their lawless excesses; and at once provoked that Abeillard should be resolute not to desert his post, and that he even seemed capable of indulging his favourite pursuits, in the midst of their clamours, they meditated higher schemes of vengeance. They had recourse to poison, which they mixed up with the dishes, or threw into the liquors, which were prepared for his table. By good fortune, or by address, he escaped these nefarious machinations.—They then attempted to poison the chalice, which held the wine for the sacrifice of the altar: but in this also they failed of success<sup>f</sup>. Among the monks he had friends, who were careful

<sup>a</sup> Hist. Calam.

<sup>r</sup> Vie d'Abeil. p. 296.

<sup>f</sup> Hist. Calam.

careful to give him timely notice of the designs of his enemies.—From the circumstance of the poisoned *chalice*, we discover that Abeillard was, at this time, a priest. When he took holy orders is uncertain, though it probably happened whilst he was at St. Denys, soon after his admission into that convent.

Conon, count of Nantes, being dangerously ill, had requested Abeillard to come over to him. He obeyed the summons, taking with him only one servant, and a young monk, whom he much esteemed. In preference to the count's palace, Abeillard chose a more humble dwelling: he had a brother living at Nantes, and with him he lodged. Here it was that the servant, whom the monks had corrupted before he left St. Gildas, attempted to execute another scheme they had laid to poison their abbot. They had judged that, at so great a distance, he would suspect no stratagem, and that at last they should be successful. The dish was prepared; but when it was laid before his master, either from want of appetite, or as he himself remarks, by the care of divine providence, he was not disposed to eat. The young monk was not equally protected; he ate, was soon after seized with convulsions, and expired in extreme torture. The servant instantly disappeared; from which it was evident, who had been the perpetrator of the horrid deed<sup>t</sup>.—Abeillard remained some time longer at Nantes: it was almost his native spot, and here his name was in great estimation; but after the count's recovery, he judged proper to return to his abbey.

<sup>t</sup> Hist. Calam.

BOOK IV. As the atrocious designs of the monks were now publicly known, Abeillard was advised to be more on his guard: he withdrew therefore, with a few companions, to some cells at a distance, where, it was imagined, he would be more secure. But such enemies, as were the monks of St. Gildas, are not easily deterred from a fixed purpose: they followed Abeillard to his cells. Here they watched his motions; and whenever they were told that he had ventured to move from home, they waited his return; and they posted assassins near the roads through which he was to pass. Nor were these attempts more successful. A favourite indeed of heaven must have been the man, whom such repeated attacks could never, in the least, injure! But, as usual, I suspect the tale to be exaggerated.

An accident, however, soon befell him, which proved that he was not at least invulnerable. Riding out, one day, for amusement, or on business, his horse violently threw him, by which his neck was dislocated. He was relieved by immediate assistance; but the consequences of his fall, he complains, were very painful, and they caused a general debility, from which he never quite recovered<sup>u</sup>.

No sooner was he able to move about, than he resolved, seeing not the most gentle usage could mollify their fury, nor the utmost caution guard him any longer from their insults, to try on his enemies the effects of canonical censures. In an ignorant age, these have been sometimes known to succeed, when other arms have failed. He excommunicated the most refractory. Intimidated by the sentence, their arrogant effrontery seemed disposed to relent: they  
acquainted

<sup>u</sup> Hist. Calam.



acquainted their abbot, that voluntarily they would leave St. Gildas, and never more give him the smallest disturbance; if he would withdraw the censure he had pronounced. Abeillard accepted their proposal; to comply with which they solemnly bound themselves by an oath. But such ties would avail little; they did not quit St. Gildas, and very soon recommenced their wonted career of profligacy and base intrigue. Abeillard resolved to have recourse to Rome.

Innocent the second was then pope. To him the behaviour of these unruly miscreants was stated, and he dispatched a minister, with legatine powers, whose duty it should be, on the spot, to examine the truth of the charges, and to pronounce sentence. Before the duke of Britany and the neighbouring prelates the cause was heard: the criminality of the monks was notorious; and the legate compelled them, again upon oath, to subscribe to the former conditions. The business seemed terminated, and the Roman envoy departed<sup>v</sup>.

After the departure of the most factious members, Abeillard came out from his retirement: he presumed, that all danger was over, and that, in confidence, he might resume the government of his abbey. He was mistaken: the remaining part of the community, either possessed all the animosity, or they were disposed to take up the quarrel, of their exiled brethren. What poison, and the sword of hired assassins, had not effected, they doubted not could be executed by their own arm. In the night-time, with daggers in their hands, they assailed his apartments: he was awakened by the noise, and had time to escape. A subterraneous

<sup>v</sup> Hist. Calam.

BOOK IV. passage offered him an asylum, through which he passed, and was received into the house of a neighbouring gentleman<sup>w</sup>. This is a forced translation of the passage; the truth is, that they were only meditating this dark scheme, when Abeillard was apprised of it, and by the friendly assistance of a certain nobleman was rescued from the danger, which threatened him<sup>x</sup>.

A more deplorable state than this will not easily be conceived; and the life of Abeillard seemed to be winding up in the true form of tragedy: his mind was not equal to the pressure of circumstances, and his lamentations are all drawn in character. “ The evils which surround me, says he, “ thicken every hour, and I see the naked sword suspended “ over my head. How like am I to the deluded courtier “ of the Sicilian tyrant! With the wealth and gaudy pageantry of royalty before him, he viewed the dagger “ pointed at his life, and at once the dream of happiness “ was over. From the lowly condition of a poor monk I “ was raised to wealth and honours; and thus it ends: my “ misery has increased with my preferment. Let my example be a warning to those, whom ambition may prompt “ to venture spontaneously on the treacherous path of “ worldly grandeur.”—Then in the most religious sentiments he proceeds. “ But since all things happen by the “ divine appointment; in every distress this should be the “ christian’s consolation, that the goodness of heaven permits nothing to derange its all-perfect system; from evil “ good is ultimately deduced. Let this be our prayer: “ *Thy will be done!* How inordinately, therefore, do they “ act,

<sup>w</sup> Vie d’Abeil. t. ii. p. 14.

<sup>x</sup> Hist. Calam.

“ aft, who confeſs that the hand of God directs all events, BOOK IV.  
 “ yet murmur when they ſuffer: it is their own will which  
 “ they look to, whatever their words may be; and in ſeek-  
 “ ing that, they tacitly oppoſe the unerring ways of pro-  
 “ vidence.”

In theſe ſentiments, which became the abbot of St. Gil-  
 das, he purpoſed ſtill to remain at his convent, hoping that  
 time, and lenient meaſures, might at laſt give ſucceſs to his  
 exertions. In the ſame ſentiments it was, that he wrote the  
 memoirs of his own life, which are brought up to this pe-  
 riod, and here they cloſe, about the year 1134.

’ Hiſt. Calam.

END OF THE FOURTH BOOK.



THE  
H I S T O R Y  
OF THE LIVES OF  
ABEILLARD and HELOISA.

B O O K V.

*He writes the story of his own life—State of the Paraclet—Abeillard's memoirs fall into the hands of Heloisa—She writes her first letter—Abeillard's answer—Heloisa's second letter—Abeillard's reply—Mr. Pope's Heloisa.—Heloisa's third letter—Abeillard's answer—Other works of Abeillard—St. Bernard visits the Paraclet.*

Anno, 1134.

**I**T is some alleviation to the sufferer, when he knows that he is not alone in misery.—Forlorn, as I described it, was the condition of Abeillard at St. Gildas, nor did he see any end to his sufferings. Drawing some consolation from study, but more from religion, with difficulty he wore away the heavy hours. Thus pensive and sad he was, deeming himself the most wretched of men, when a letter was brought him,

**BOOK V.**

*He writes the story of his own life.*

BOOK V. him, written by a friend, whom he had left behind him in the neighbourhood of the Paraclet. This friend, whose name or condition is not recorded, had long lived in habits of great intimacy with Abeillard<sup>a</sup>. Perhaps he was the man who accompanied him, as has been related, into the desert, and who was his companion, when together they began to cultivate that inhospitable spot. Some great misfortune had befallen him, and he was deep in distress, when, to beg advice and comfort, he wrote to Abeillard.

The abbot read the letter, and he lamented the hard fate of his friend. But, as I have just observed, there was still some comfort in the reflection, that he had now a partner in affliction. To remove the load, as well as he was able, from his friend's shoulders, he was most willing; and he would pour balm into his wounds, if he could. They can feel most for others, who themselves have suffered most. He considered by what method he could best administer consolation; but when again he reviewed his friend's narration, and the recollection of his own calamities had due time to operate, the tale, that at first affected him, vanished into air, and he saw nothing round him but the dark cloud of his own misfortunes. What then, he thought, could so efficaciously answer his friend's request, as minutely to detail the events of a life, which was but a chequered scene of misery? With it he would compare his own, and from the comparison derive the happiness he wanted.—He had also, in this undertaking, a more selfish object in view: it was to enjoy the pleasure, which the unfortunate feel in relating their own story; and when accumulated before him he should

<sup>a</sup> Hist. Calam.

should behold the whole tissue of past events, possibly present evils might appear more supportable. What the particular distresses of his friend were, he does not say: intent on himself, he shut his eyes on all the world besides. I have before had occasion to remark that, selfishness was a very leading trait in the character of Abeillard.

He compiled therefore the memoirs of his own life.—It is unnecessary I should say much on this celebrated tract: the preceding history is faithfully extracted from it, which shows what are its contents. The work is not ill-written, though it possesses few marks of genius, and less of elegance. The age indeed was barbarous; nor can it be, in such circumstances, that the most splendid talents will ever rise above a certain level. Were the thing possible, what subject was ever better formed to call abilities into action? Not a single event does he relate, of which he is not himself the hero. Yet he is sometimes uninteresting, and often tedious, entering on discussions which have little weight, and resuming arguments which are not of a nature to convince. His portraits are generally caricatured, and his representations of events are evidently overcharged. This we may pardon in a man, who so often had suffered unjustly.—I am surprised that his language is not more pure. He quotes the best Roman writers: he had read Cicero; Seneca is his favourite; and with Virgil, Ovid, and Lucan, he seems to have been familiar. Among the fathers of the church, Jerom, who has been styled the christian Tully, was his admired author: him he had perused with avidity, because, besides his language which charmed him, he discovered in his life many events, which resembled his own, and from his character and

BOOK V. deportment he could draw some lessons of comfort.—But with all their imperfections, these memoirs of Abeillard are valuable, and they are read with pleasure.—Having completed the work, he sent it to his friend.

State of the  
Paraclet.

Since Abeillard had taken his last leave of the Paraclet, which was about four or five years, it had greatly prospered. The number of religious was much increased, and wealth had increased with their numbers. The fame of Heloisa was widely spread; and many ladies of distinction petitioned for admittance into her convent: the fortunes they carried with them were considerable<sup>b</sup>. To secure their extensive property, and to procure such privileges, as were deemed most expedient, Heloisa applied to Rome. The same Innocent, whom I have already mentioned, was then pope. He graciously acceded to the petition, and addressed to them a bull, wherein, after having taken the monastery of the Paraclet under the protection of the apostolic see, he declares that all their possessions, as well such as they then occupied, as what might hereafter, by lawful means, fall into their hands, should remain to them, secure and unimpaired, for ever.—Should any one dare to infringe this solemn decree, he denounces against him the severest censures<sup>c</sup>.—By another brief, the same pontiff forbids the bishop or any person whatever, to molest the nuns in the free choice of their abbesses, or to interfere in any of their concerns; he ordains moreover, that, on no occasion, they should be obliged to quit their convent, not even when their abbess was to be blessed, but that the ceremony should be performed within their own walls<sup>d</sup>.—A good priest, named Gundricus, about  
the

<sup>b</sup> Vie d'Abeil. vol. ii. p. 20.

<sup>c</sup> Abeil. Op. p. 346.

<sup>d</sup> Ibid.



the same time, gave to the Paraclet an estate, to which he had succeeded; and this grant also was confirmed to them by the Roman pontiff.

Thus did fortune shower down her gifts on the Paraclet; but Heloisa was the favourite child that attracted her partial notice. The lovely abbess had indeed reason to be satisfied with her situation. Every day, fresh successes seemed to attend her endeavours: she was prosperous without doors, and within the walls of her convent, harmony, happiness, piety, and religious discipline, uniting in sacred concord, diffused joy over every countenance, and peace into every cell. Agnes, the niece of the abbot of St. Gildas, was her prioress, and in her she reposed the principal administration of their internal œconomy\*. Thus she was more at liberty to pursue her favourite occupations of study and sequestered meditation. The management of their temporal affairs was in the hands of proper agents.—The prompt acquiescence which Rome shewed to her petitions, demonstrated the high opinion entertained of her merit, and the circumstance doubtless was flattering to herself.

So admired, so honoured, so beloved, if Heloisa was not happy, we must look for the cause in some untowardness of disposition, or rather in a natural reluctance, which her mind seemed to bear towards the confinement of a cloistered life. But this is conjectural: we have no reason to say that she was not happy. Abeillard, indeed, had deserted the Paraclet; but the ill-natured reflections of the world had compelled him to it: her good sense therefore told her that it was her duty to submit. If since that time, all corre-

\* Vie d'Abeil p. 20.

BOOK V. spondence had ceased between them, she could ascribe it still to a certain delicacy of character. Placed as he was at the head of an undisciplined monastery, good example, she knew, was essentially necessary in the superior. The time might come, when again she and her sisters would enjoy the happiness of his society and of his learned conversation. In this view she rested.

Abeillard's  
memoirs fall  
into the  
hands of  
Heloisa.

The letter of consolation, which Abeillard addressed to his friend, had been received. It was natural he should admire it, and should read it to others. Copies of it were taken, and the original itself circulated from hand to hand. It was at last taken to the Paraclet<sup>f</sup>. The connection betwixt that house and Abeillard was well known, and it was an obvious thought, that the abbess, in particular, might like to read a story, wherein she had borne some part, and the whole of which, besides being an ingenious performance, contained the history of the life of Abeillard.—Heloisa took the letter from the hand of him who brought it. The superscription at once told her by whom it was written, and she opened it with eagerness. With the same eagerness her eye ran over the contents; and soon, indeed, she felt how much her heart was interested in the story. It was the circumstantial detail of his life and adventures, and of their joint loves and joint misfortunes. At every line she pitied him; this was a sentiment she might lawfully indulge; and as she pitied him, again she began to love.—At no time, it appears, can the ruling passion be so far subdued, as not to be immediately re-excited, when causes are applied with which its action has been strongly united.—Having read the letter,  
she

<sup>f</sup> Ep. Helois. 1<sup>a</sup>.

she gave it back to her officious friends, and retired in confusion to her cell.

We well know, for they have been faithfully brought down to us, what were the thoughts which now rushed into the breast of Heloise. The closing passages of his letter, wherein he related what he had suffered from his monks, and how great the danger still was, to which he was hourly exposed, dwelt heaviest on her mind. A thousand times she wished it were in her power to succour him; and she formed a thousand plans, as impracticable as they were wild. Abeillard was in Britany, and she, a cloistered nun, was immured at the Paraclet! To providence she could only look, and on her knees, she prayed, that heaven would protect him. How truly miserable had his life been, and yet what mortal was ever more entitled to the smiles of fortune!—Her recollection now returned upon the events, in which she was personally concerned. He had told them, indeed; but was it not with some indifference? The narration of his own immediate troubles was prolix and circumstantial; here he was brief and rapid. Yet how much had she not loved him; and what sacrifices had she not made to please him! Did all this merit no return?—This letter itself was a proof, how small was the space she occupied in his heart. A man, whom he hardly knew, requested his advice, and he had given it in a manner that was almost new and unprecedented: he had poured into his bosom all the public, and many of the private, circumstances of his life. To her, for five long years, he had not written a single line! Was she even sure she was not erased from his memory?—The  
pensive

BOOK V. penfive abbefs indulged the fad reflection, and feemed ready to fink under it.

The pious fifterhood foon noticed that their abbefs was more fad than ufual: her countenance grew wan; and fhe never left her cell, unlefs when the duties of her ftation compelled her to it. They were anxious to know the caufe of the fudden change, and, with a pleafing confidence, they asked it of her. Heloifa told them of the letter fhe had read, and of the forlorn condition, in which Abeillard, their common friend and benefactor, then was. They heard the news with trepidation, and in all, but love, fymphathifed with the feelings of their abbefs<sup>h</sup>. What ftep could be taken to relieve their anxious bofoms, they knew not; but unani- mously they requested that fomethng might be done.

This folitude of her fifters was very pleafing to the mind of Heloifa. Again fhe revolved the diftreffful train of her reflections; and foon it occurred to her, that there was one expedient in her power, which poffibly might anfwer her moft fanguine defires. She would write to the abbot of St. Gildas, praying that, without delay, he would inform her of his fituation; and, at the fame time, fhe would difburden her mind of fome other thoughts, the impreffion of which was very painful.—But this fcheme, from a word fhe lets fall in her letter, fhe feems not to have executed immediately. Bufinefs perhaps hindered her; or it might be the tumult of her own mind, which, with difficulty, could be reduced to order.—The letter was, at length, completed, and fhe difpatched it into Britany.

<sup>h</sup> Ep. Helois. 1<sup>a</sup>.

She writes  
her first letter.

There is some affectation in the address of this letter: she files Abeillard, her master, her father, her husband, her brother; and herself his handmaid, his daughter, his wife, his sister. The language of real passion is seldom so precise. — She then tells him, that accidentally she had seen the letter, he had written to his friend, and with what ardour she had read it: she wanted comfort, and looked for it from his words; but how miserably had she been disappointed! — She recapitulates the substance of his story, and remarks how admirably he had fulfilled the promise made to his friend: but on the hearts of his daughters of the Paraclet cruel was the effect, this too faithful tale had made! — She begs him, for Christ's sake, to inform them, and that repeatedly, of each circumstance of his present dangers. "I and my sisters," continues she, are the sole remains of all your friends: "let us, at least, partake of your joys and sorrows. The "condolence of others is used to bring some relief to the "sufferer, and a load, laid on many shoulders, is more "easily supported." — She descants on the soft intercourse and pleasing effects of letters; a method by which he may always be present with them, and of which, if Abeillard only be willing, no invidious passion or impediment, can ever bereave them.

She reminds him by what ties he is bound to the Paraclet: it was he only who had erected its oratory, and he had established its congregation: but can the young plant prosper, if it be not often watered with peculiar care? "We are "women, Sir, says she, by nature weak and delicate. Thus "had our society been long formed, it would still be exposed to danger. But now, if you give us not all your  
"attention

BOOK V. “attention and all your care, how shall we brave the storm?”—She tells him of the labour he throws away on the ungrateful vineyard of St. Gildas; that his admonitions are all in vain; and that the treasures which he squanders on his enemies, should rather be kept for those, who are docile and obedient. “But I will say nothing of others,” continues she: think only how much you owe to me, “Whatever obligations bind you to the devout part of my sex, are all concentrated in your Heloisa.”

Now she enters on her own immediate interests, and in a manner the most forcible and affecting, expostulates with the ungrateful and selfish man.—She speaks of his neglectful usage, when, at his command, she first left the world. “Not even then, says she, when long grief had worn me down, did you come to see me, or even send me one line of comfort.”—She recalls to his mind the excess of her love for him; she speaks of the loss she suffered when she lost him; she describes the sacrifice she made of herself and of all her dispositions to his will, and the disinterestedness with which she made it. In a flight of romantic passion she recurs to the ideas, which wildly filled her breast, when in the name of *mistress* she could discover so many charms, and when she would have deemed it more eligible to be *that* to Abeillard, than to be the *wife* of Cæsar. “For the more I humbled myself before you, says she, the greater right I thought I should have to your favour; and thus also I hoped the less to injure the great reputation you had acquired.” These things she recapitulates to shew him, what pretensions she now has to expect some return.

She

She then reviews, with much complacency, the splendid endowments and the endearing character of Abeillard, which had so justly engaged her love. She recounts the general admiration which followed him, the envy with which her own happiness was contemplated, and the melancholy reverse of fortune which soon ensued. That she was the occasion of his misfortunes, she owns, but yet that she was not guilty; because it is the motive from which we act, and not the event of things, which makes us criminal: equity weighs the intention. "What, at all times, were my dispositions in your regard, she says, you who knew them can only judge. To you I refer all my actions, and on your decision I rest my cause."

Again she turns to his neglectful treatment of her, during the many years she resided at Argenteuil, and she entreats him, if he can, to account for it; or else that she must herself say, what her own suspicions are. These suspicions she then declares, and they prove that, in spite of love, she was not blind to the failings of Abeillard. "But how much is it my wish, proceeds Heloisa, that your own self-love could devise some excuse, which might ease my pain! Were I able, even I would willingly invent some pretext, which, to extenuate your fault, might seem to lessen the pretensions I have to your notice."

Drawing to a conclusion, again she proposes her petition, that he would write to her; a petition, she trusts, which he will not find extravagant or difficult of execution. But if he prove so niggardly in words, what reason has she to think he will be more liberal in things of consequence? Even at this moment, she urges, she is a victim to his will; his will

BOOK V. it was, and not religion, which called her to the cloister. If then she ceases to have merit in his eyes; vain indeed is all her labour! From God she can look for no reward, for whose sake hitherto, she confesses, she has done nothing.

She upbraids him with the circumstance of his having insisted that she should put on the veil, before he would surrender his liberty: and in that instance, she says, his mistrust of her tore her heart, and that she blushed for him. Could he have reason to mistrust her, when he knew that, at a single word, she would have accompanied him to the gates of eternal misery? “Were you less sure of my love,” continues she, “you would be more solicitous: but because my conduct has rendered you secure, you neglect me. Once more recollect what I have done for you, and how great is the debt you owe me.”

There was a time, she acknowledges, when the motive of her attachment might have appeared uncertain to others: it might have been the love of pleasure, or the indulgence of vanity. It could now be mistaken no longer; for in obedience to him, she had sacrificed all her inclinations, and had reserved nothing, the hope only excepted, that by so doing she should become more perfectly his.—Then thus she concludes.—“By that God, to whom your life is consecrated, I conjure you, give me so much of yourself as is at your disposal, that is, send me some lines of consolation. Do it with this design at least, that my mind being more at ease, I may serve God with more alacrity. When formerly the love of pleasure was your pursuit, often did I hear from you. In your songs the name of Heloise was made familiar to every tongue: it was heard in every street:



“street: the walls of every house repeated it. With how much more propriety might you now call me to God, than you did then to scenes of dissipation? Weigh your obligations, and attend to my request. A few words shall close this long epistle.—My only friend, farewell!”

The critic, the moralist, and the man of sentiment, will find much to admire in this charming letter: but it is the original they must read, and to that I refer them.—In it the philosophic abbess displays great knowledge of the human heart; she aims not to disguise her own weaknesses; and the imperfections of Abeillard, whilst she extols his virtues and blazons his endowments, she holds up before him in colours full of truth and expression. Seldom has such love as her's been so free-spoken and impartial. That his too apparent ingratitude and neglect of her should have roused her resentment, was natural; but in terms how gentle does she utter her reproaches, and how mild is the edge of her sharpest reproofs! She seems not to have written a line, which the indulgence of affection had not first retouched and fitted to its place. It may seem that she rates her own merits very highly: but they only can think it, who have not weighed her conduct: in the mind of Abeillard, at least, there could be no measure found by which to appreciate their just value. There they should have risen, in proportion to his own ingratitude, which, I fear, was incommensurable. Her request was of all things the most moderate; and when she considered with what promptness he had entered into a minute detail of his life, to satisfy the wishes of a man, he called his friend, was it much to desire a few lines only, and these were to regard himself? But it seems,

BOOK V. she suspected that even this request would hardly be complied with.

The moral tendency of some passages may be controverted. But there will soon be a better occasion of discussing this difficulty. Suffice it now to say, that she is writing in confidence to her husband and her friend; and therefore, without reserve, she lays her thoughts before him. In her instructions to the nuns of the Paraclet, very different, I suspect, would have been her language. But on no occasion does she pretend to justify the unbounded strength of passion, she once felt for Abeillard; she rather treats it as a weakness; at all events, she only expresses its reality as a fact, which from him was entitled to call for some return.—In great diffidence she acknowledges how much she wants assistance and advice; humbly she confesses her unworthiness before God, for whose sake she had done nothing; and she looks to peace of mind, as the only state, in which the duties of her calling could be properly observed.

The language and composition of this letter are both admirable. There is sometimes a purity, a precision, a perspicuity, a conciseness, a nerve in her expressions, which, even in the best days of Roman latinity, would have been read with pleasure. Where she falls from classic elegance, it is the subject, or the barbarous idiom of the age, from which the ablest scholars can never free themselves, which draws her down. Compare her writing with that of Abeillard or even of Bernard himself, and preference must be given to the female pen.—The subject she discusses with great art; her arguments are well disposed; she adduces authorities to enforce her reasoning; and she turns the object  
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in every direction, that its whole efficacy may be felt. The interests of lovers were never in the hands of a more able advocate; and never was the breast of ingratitude searched with an address, at once so penetrating, and so indulgent. Abeillard's distresses called for indulgence; and had he not found it from the pen of Heloisa, her address to him, which I admire, would not have possessed that softness of character, which is its greatest beauty.

Broken by ill-usage as was the abbot of St. Gildas, the reader perhaps will be disposed to sympathise with his feelings, as he reads Heloisa's letter. What emotions it excited, we know not, as guardedly he seems to have concealed them: but stoic as he was, unless apathy had deadened every fibre, he must have felt its general tendency. Estranged from the world and pleasure by habit and by necessity, the ardent language of Heloisa would find no responsive motions in his heart. He might pity her; perhaps even he might smile at her folly. But religious, prudent, pious, as he now was, it would have ill-beseemed his character, to have exhibited any symptoms of tenderness, or to have returned an answer to Heloisa, from which fuel might have been added to a flame already too fervid. As a friend it was his duty to still the rising storm; and nothing, he might judge, would more contribute to it, than language, which should breathe religious self-denial and mortification; than sentiments full of piety, of submission to the divine will, and of solicitude for the eternal welfare of his soul. So thinking, he closed Heloisa's letter, and wrote as follows.

" If, since our conversion from the world to God, I have  
 " not yet written, either to instruct or to console you, it  
 " was

Abeillard's  
 answer.

BOOK V. “ was not done neglectingly; ascribe it to the high opinion  
 “ I have ever entertained of your wisdom and prudence.  
 “ How could I think, that she stood in need of my assistance,  
 “ to whom heaven had so largely distributed its best  
 “ gifts? You were able, I knew, by example, as by word,  
 “ to instruct the ignorant, to comfort the pusillanimous,  
 “ and to admonish the luke-warm. When prioress of Argenteuil,  
 “ these duties, I remember, you used long ago to  
 “ practise; and if now you give the same attention to your  
 “ daughters, as you did then to your sisters, more is not  
 “ requisite, and all that I could say would be of no value.  
 “ But if, in your humility, you think otherwise, and my  
 “ instructions, in the business of religion, can avail you any  
 “ thing, tell me only, on what subjects, you would have  
 “ me write, and as God shall direct me, I will endeavour to  
 “ satisfy you.”

He then thanks heaven, which had inspired the pious  
 nuns of the Paraclet with a solicitude in regard to the dangers,  
 to which his life was exposed, hoping that by their prayers he  
 should thus experience the divine protection.  
 “ And with this view principally, continues he, it is, that  
 “ I hastened to send you the form of prayer, which you  
 “ once so earnestly requested from me, you, my sister, formerly  
 “ dear to me in the world, but now most dear to me  
 “ in Christ. Thus may you offer to God a constant sacrifice  
 “ of prayers, urging him to pardon *our* great and  
 “ manifold sins, and to avert the hourly dangers which  
 “ threaten me.”

He talks much of the powerful efficacy of prayer, which  
 he proves from the holy scriptures, insisting particularly on  
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the examples of wives praying for their husbands, and on the general prevalence of female supplications. He tells her how much he confides in the prayers of the nuns of the Paraclet, and in her own, to which, as her husband, he claims a peculiar right.—At the times he had formerly lived with them at the Paraclet, it was their practice, at the end of each church-service, to subjoin a prayer for their founder: he now sends them another prayer, adapted to his own perilous situation, which he requests, to prove that their charity is sincere, they will as often repeat for him, as they bend their knees before the throne of grace. It runs thus: “ O God, who by thy servant didst here assemble thy hand-  
“ maids in thy holy name, grant, we beseech thee, that he  
“ be protected from all adversity, and be restored safe to us  
“ thy servants!”

Having, as he trusts, secured the prayers he wanted, he goes on solemnly: “ But if, by the permission of heaven,  
“ my enemies should so far prevail as to take away my life;  
“ or if, by any chance, while absent from you, I should be  
“ numbered with the dead; it is my prayer, that my body  
“ be conveyed to the Paraclet. There my daughters, rather  
“ my sisters in Christ, turning their eyes often to my tomb,  
“ will more strongly be excited to petition heaven for the  
“ repose of my soul. And indeed, to a mind penetrated  
“ with grief, and stricken by the dark view of its crimes,  
“ where can be found a resting-place, at once so safe, and  
“ so full of hope, as that which, in a peculiar manner, bears  
“ the name of, and is dedicated to, the Comforter? Be-  
“ sides, I know not, where a christian could find a better  
“ grave, than in the society of holy women consecrated to  
“ God.”

He

BOOK V.

He concludes: " It is my most earnest request, that the  
 " solicitude you now too strongly feel for the preservation  
 " of my life, you will then extend to my soul. Carry into  
 " my grave the same degree of love, you shewed me when  
 " alive, that is, let your suffrages for me be peculiar and  
 " incessant.—Live, and farewell: farewell, my sisters; live,  
 " but in Christ: remember Abeillard!"

The reader, whom Heloisa's romantic epistle had left animated and greatly interested in her cause, will, I know, be sadly disappointed by this cold reply. To me it is all I looked for, and it stamps indelibly the character, I had given to the man. Besides, is not the contrast pleasing, which, by lines so strong, divides the hearts of two, whom fabulous report has so often said were made for one another?—He evades very artfully the charge of ingratitude, by a complimentary excuse, which, if it did not satisfy, would, he knew, please her vanity.—His earnest request for prayer shows how much he prized his own concerns, and how much affliction had lowered the exuberance of his soul. When he dwells on its efficacy, it is a dull discussion; and when he prescribes the new form, which is daily to be recited for his safety, we see the abböt, big in his own importance, and selfish as became his dignity,

The latter part of his address is solemn and affecting; but had he thought less of himself, or more of Heloisa, never could it have fallen from his pen: he would have felt, that every word was armed with a point, far too sharp for her irritable texture. But in the dispositions, I have described, what would he not risk in the gratification of his ruling passion? He concludes in a distich, the sentiment of which

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is apposite, and very analogous to the general features of the piece. BOOK V.

On the whole, though the letter be not such, as a modern novelist would write; yet, as it came in character from Abeillard, it merits commendation: he meant it well. The event, indeed, will shew, that he was not sufficiently guarded; and perhaps a less austere reply would have succeeded better.—In point of composition, it is in the style of all his other writings, harsh, inelegant, languid, and sometimes intricate. It harmonised with his mind.—We shall now see, how it was received by Heloisa.

Agitated by the workings of her imagination, she had looked with impatience for the return of her messenger. It was an anxious moment. Many times she repented, that she had said so much; her letter might offend, or it might give him pain. It occurred sometimes to her, that she had omitted things of the greatest moment, and that her long address was too trifling to merit notice. Was she sure, the messenger would find him? He might have absconded from the pursuits of his enemies; or the fatal stroke might have been given, which was for ever to deprive her of his sight! Should he deign to answer her letter; what tidings would it bring?—In this wild uncertainty her mind was tossed, when the messenger arrived, and he brought her an answer from Abeillard.

He who has experienced that inanition of heart, which disappointment causes, when expectation has been highly raised, will best know what Heloisa felt in perusing these cold and inauspicious lines. There was not a single sentiment which met her feelings. A formal compliment, much

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about

BOOK V. about prayer and its efficacy, were the principal topics; and he closed this languid sermon by a cruel request, which insensibility only, or the certain prospect of dissolution, could have dictated. She hung over the heavy words; she read them to her sisters; a general consternation prevailed; they saw the assassin's knife pointed at the breast of their dearest friend; they turned their thoughts to heaven, but the prayer he had sent them, and which they now attempted to repeat, could find no utterance. Heloisa, who should have moderated this burst of intemperate wailing, only added to it by her sighs and sorrowing gestures: but in her it was not the grief of apprehension only which interested; she had other thoughts to contend with, such as disappointment, ingratitude, suspicion, and unavailing love had raised. In this *disorder*, again she resolved to disburden her heavy mind to Abeillard.—The moment which the agitated mind chuses for the expression of its feelings, is of all the least adapted to the display of reason, and the use of temperate, congruous, and guarded language. Such compositions must ever be read with candour, and be judged with indulgence. Why I have made this remark, will soon be evident.

Heloiſa's ſecond letter.

The opening of this second letter is rather captious and unimportant.—Heloisa expresses a surprise that, in the very front of his last salutation, Abeillard should have placed her name before his own: this, she says, was contrary to the usual stile of epistolary correspondence, and even contrary to the obvious order of things.

She then seizes upon those concluding lines of his letter: “ But if, by the permission of heaven, my enemies should  
“ so far prevail as to take away my life, &c.” and she asks  
with



with emphasis: "Oh Abeillard! how could your mind suggest such ideas; how could your hand write them? No, no; God will never so far forsake his servants, as to perpetuate our lives, when you are gone: he will not give us that kind of existence, which is ten times worse than death." She reminds him, that it will be his duty rather, who had assembled them at the Paraclet, to celebrate their obsequies, and to commend their souls to God. She entreats him: "In future, do, Sir, be more cautious in your expressions. Already, alas! we are wretched enough; why should you make us more so; why, before the hour, deprive us of that poor life, which we drag along with difficulty? Each day is sufficiently loaded with its own misery; and that last fatal one, covered with a robe of bitterness, will bring to each of us an ample share of sorrow."—The address is solemn and affecting.

She goes on: "You request, should your death happen whilst absent from us, that your body be conveyed to the Paraclet: thus, you think, with your image ever before us, to derive greater benefit from our prayers."—"Do you then imagine, (she exclaims in a strain of impassioned eloquence,) we can ever forget you? Or could that be a season for prayer, when general consternation shall have banished every tranquil thought: when reason shall have lost its sway, and the tongue its utterance: when the mind, in frantic rage, rebelling against its maker, shall rather seek to provoke his anger by complaints, than to assuage him by supplications?—God grant that day may be our last! If the sole mention of your death thus strike us to the heart; what would the reality not do? It is our

BOOK V. “ prayer to heaven, that we may not survive you ; that we  
 “ may never have to perform that office, which we expect  
 “ from your hands.”

Again she entreats him to be more considerate for the sake of them all ; at least, that he will spare Heloisa, by refraining from all expressions which, like the shafts of death, penetrate her soul.—The succeeding lines are placid and beautiful : “ For the mind worn down by grief is a stranger  
 “ to repose ; plunged in troubles, it is little able to think  
 “ on God. Will you impede his service, to whom you have  
 “ devoted our lives ? It were to be wished that every necessary event, which brings sorrow with it, might take place,  
 “ when we expect it least : for if that torment us, which  
 “ human foresight cannot avert, it only raises unavailing  
 “ fears.” To this she applies the words of her favourite  
 Lucan,

Sit subitum quodcumque paras ; sit cæca futuri  
 Mens hominum fati ! Liceat sperare timenti.

Lib. ii.

The last words of the poet, *may he that fears, still live in hope*, touched an irritable fibre, with which, in the breast of Heloisa, was too nearly associated a long series of calamitous reflections ; and its motion raised a storm, which the reader, perhaps, will view with wonder.

“ Hope ! cried she ; and if I lose you, what have I to  
 “ hope for ? Must I remain a pilgrim here, when you, my  
 “ only comfort, are gone from me ? But even in you what  
 “ comfort have I, save only the thought, that still you live ?

“ All

“ All other joys are forbidden to me : even the privilege of  
“ your company, it seems, is too much for Heloïsa !”

BOOK V.

Having indulged this first fall of passion, she is hurried impetuously forward.—“ May I then say, that heaven has  
“ been my relentless persecutor ! If you call it clemency,  
“ where is cruelty to be found ? Fortune, that savage def-  
“ tiny, has spent against me every arrow of her rage : she  
“ has none left to throw at others. Her quiver was full,  
“ and she exhausted it on me : mortals have no longer  
“ cause to dread her : nor if there were a shaft left, would  
“ it find in me a spot to light on. But though bleeding at  
“ every pore, my enemy does not stay her barbarous hand :  
“ she suspends the fatal stroke, and only fears lest my wounds  
“ prove mortal. Of all the wretched I am the most forlorn  
“ and wretched !”—With great expression she relates, how  
much she had been raised above the rest of her sex, and how  
low she had fallen ; that there was no woman of birth or for-  
tune, that would have compared situation with her ; and  
that in prosperity and in adversity her life had known no  
measure. “ My happiness was unbounded, she says, so is  
“ my sorrow. Hanging over my pitiable state, I shed the  
“ more tears, when I view the magnitude of my losses ; but  
“ they redouble, when recollection tells me, how dear that  
“ possession was, which I have lost. To the greatest joys  
“ have succeeded the greatest sorrows.”

Again she arraigns the ways of providence, and boldly  
enters on the discussion of a subject, into which the decency  
of modern language will not permit me to follow her. There  
is strength in her reasoning, but the sentiments are indeli-  
cate : passion may be pleaded as some excuse, and the  
manners

BOOK V. manners of the age will come in to assist her justification. Modern delicacy, which sometimes borders on affectation, is no proof of innocence of character.

“ Having lowered yourself, she continues, to raise me, and thus given dignity to myself and all my family, what more could be expected? All guilt was cancelled before God and man. But why was Heloisa born to be the occasion of so black a perfidy—!” She then proceeds to shew, from historical examples, how baneful has ever been the influence of women on the greatest men; still drawing some consolation from the reflection, that, like the women she had mentioned, no intentional guilt could be imputed to her: but was she sure, she says, that her many antecedent sins had not justly provoked the wrath of heaven? “ God then grant me power, she exclaims, to do ample penance! May my sorrow, lengthened out to many days, bear some proportion to what you have suffered! It is but just, and to it I consign my life. Thus to Abeillard, at least, I shall make some atonement, *if I make none to heaven.*”

These were the words, which opened to her view a scene, that in candour, truth, and simplicity she lays before her friend. “ I will now disclose to you, she says, all the secret foibles of my heart. Tell me then, can I hope to appease the divine anger, I who, at every moment, am charging heaven with cruelty? My murmurs may draw on me greater vengeance: the sorrow, at least, of such a penitent, will not avert it. But why do I talk of penitence? Whilst the mind retains all its former attachment to sin, what avails the external language of grief? Easy, indeed, it is to declare one’s faults; it is easy to put on  
“ the

“ the imposing garb of penitence : but oh God ! how hard  
 “ is it to tear the mind from those affections, which were  
 “ once so dear ! ”—She confirms these awful sentiments by  
 the words of holy Job, and she adduces the authority of  
 Gregory and Ambrose. Then she proceeds : “ So fascinating  
 “ were the pleasures we once indulged ; the thought of  
 “ them cannot give me pain, nor can I efface their impres-  
 “ sion. Wherever I turn my eyes, in all their charms,  
 “ there are they present to me. Even in my dreams the  
 “ dear phantoms hover round me.—During the pomp of  
 “ awful sacrifice, when the soul, on the wings of prayer,  
 “ should rise more pure to heaven, the same importunate  
 “ ideas haunt my wretched soul ; they occupy every avenue  
 “ to my heart. When I should grieve for what is passed,  
 “ I only sigh that the same pleasures return no more. Too  
 “ faithful has my mind been to its impressions : it holds up  
 “ before me every circumstance of our lost connection,  
 “ when all the scenes of vanished joys play wantonly before  
 “ me.—Sometimes, I know, the strong workings of my  
 “ mind betray themselves on my countenance ; I am heard  
 “ to pronounce words, which escape unthinkingly from  
 “ me. Alas ! how truly wretched is my condition ! To me  
 “ surely may be applied those plaintive lines of the apostle ;  
 “ Miserable mortal that I am ; who will free me from this  
 “ body of death ? ” Could I but add with truth ! The grace  
 “ of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Such is this plaintive lamentation of Heloisa, which has  
 often been so unfairly represented. It is not the shameless  
 declaration of an abandoned nun, voluntarily lost in obscen-  
 ity, and glorying in the state ; but it is the ingenuous  
 confession

BOOK V. confession, which a penitent, sorrowing in her mind, makes to her husband, her friend, and her guide. Surprised we may be, that time, retirement, application, business, religion, had not erased the impressions from her soul; but this does but prove, how ardent her imagination, and how retentive her recollection was. There are minds of an extraordinary organization; and such was that of Heloisa: the very circumstances which, in others, would have banished thought, falling in her way, only fixed it more. To say she was profligate, is to speak a falsehood; to call her impudent in the confession of her weaknesses, is not to know the circumstances in which she was; and not to pity her, is to possess a heart of stone.

Heloisa then goes on to declare her unworthiness: “ They, who cannot look into my soul, think me virtuous; “ they think me chaste, because my actions are so; when “ surely this amiable virtue only dwells within the mind. “ Men may praise me; but before God I am worthless: he “ is the searcher of hearts, and his eye penetrates into the “ inmost thoughts.”—She mentions the hypocritical morality of the age, which is satisfied with the outward show of virtue. Some praise, she owns, is due to such actions; but that we are obliged not only to abstain from evil, but likewise to do good: neither of them, however, she declares, have any claim to a reward, unless they be done from a motive of pleasing God.

But if so, she adds, what must her pretensions be to any reward hereafter? “ Through the whole course of my life, “ God knows, what have been my dispositions. It was you, “ Abeillard, and not him, whom I feared most to offend; “ you,

“ you, and not him, I was most anxious to please. My  
 “ mind is still unaltered. It was no love of him, but your  
 “ command which drew me to the cloister. How miserable  
 “ then my condition if, undergoing so much, I have no  
 “ prospect of a reward hereafter! By external show, you  
 “ have been deceived like others: you ascribed to the im-  
 “ pressions of religion, what sprang from another source;  
 “ and therefore recommending yourself to my prayers, you  
 “ ask that succour from me, which I look for from you.”

She begs, he will not place that confidence in her, which  
 may cause her to lose the assistance, she wants so much. If  
 he thinks her in good health, he will apply no medicines;  
 if in affluence, his hand will not be open to relieve her;  
 and if strong, she may fall, alas! before he can run in to  
 support her. Undeserved praise, she observes, has been  
 the ruin of many.

“ Let me then entreat you, she adds, if you be an enemy  
 “ to flattery, and a friend to truth, to cease from praising  
 “ me. If you think, I possess any thing commendable, do  
 “ not you, at least, raise the wind of vanity, which may  
 “ dissipate it at a blast. Would he be thought an able phy-  
 “ sician who, from external symptoms, should pretend to  
 “ determine on the nature of an internal complaint?  
 “ Things which are common to the faint and the finner  
 “ have no merit in the sight of God. Such are all outward  
 “ practices, to which the hypocrite more sedulously adheres,  
 “ than the greatest saint.”

She continues the same beautiful chain of reflections:  
 “ The heart of man is depraved; it is inscrutable to human  
 “ sight: who yet has fathomed it? And there are ways

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“ which

BOOK V. " which seem to us straight, the ends of which lead to  
 " death. Where God has reserved judgment to himself,  
 " it is rash in man to pronounce. Praise no one while he  
 " lives. Give not commendation at a time, when the very  
 " act of doing it may make him undeserving of it. To me  
 " your praises bring the greatest delight; but therefore are  
 " they more dangerous."—The most christian moralist never  
 expressed finer sentiments.

Thus she concludes: " Tell me not, in your exhortations  
 " to a religious life, " that virtue is perfected in tempta-  
 " tion, and that he only shall be crowned, who has stoutly  
 " contended." I look for no laurels, no crown of victory,  
 " It is enough for me to keep out of the way of danger. I  
 " like not the perils of war. If God will but give me the  
 " lowest place in heaven, I shall be satisfied. No jealousy  
 " is there, where each one is pleased with his own allotment  
 " of happiness."

More reflections on this beautiful epistle will not be necessary. The reader must have made many as he came along; and he must have admired, have pitied, and have praised the lovely writer. No subject perhaps has ever been before him, from which the moralist, the philosopher, and the man of pleasure could draw more edification and improvement. The exceptionable passages, if any there really be, will have been judged with the indulgence I requested. Severe critics may be morose, and I shall not value their censures, or envy their morality.—In language this letter is much inferior to the last: it is less studied, and consequently less classical and elegant. But the thoughts are more glowing, the expression more rapid, and the connection of  
 argument.



argument more precise. As the ideas occurred, she wrote them, in the first words which offered. Such is the character of passion; neglectful, but nervous, impetuous, and full. On examination it will be found that the arrangement of her thoughts is admirable: this, it should seem, is contrary to the nature of unpremeditated composition: but surprise will cease, when we reflect, how repeatedly her mind had dwelt on the subject: it was a system of ideas: the occasion therefore no sooner called for their expression, than they fell from her pen, glowing, methodical, and natural, as they had pre-existed in the fancy of Heloisa. But innocence surely may allay with the most fervid imagination, and the humble confession of weaknesses can never be construed into an attachment to vice.

The abbot of St. Gildas was little affected by this pathetic remonstrance. He had taken his resolution, or rather his mind had taken its bent, from which no effort could withdraw it. He saw, I think, with some commiseration, the unfortunate state in which Heloisa was, and he knew the sway he had over her. He resolved therefore to try the power of serious expostulation; he would prove himself the experienced physician, to whom she had alluded, and as her distemper was known to him, he would apply a remedy. This conduct was consistent and friendly, and it merits praise.

The subject of her letter he divides into four distinct heads, which he separately discusses. "I will reply to them, says Abeillard, not so much in my own justification, as to instruct and to advise you. When you shall be made sensible, that my requests are founded on reason,

Abeillard's  
reply.

BOOK V. “ you will be more disposed to assent to them; when you  
 “ shall discover that, in my own concerns I am not repre-  
 “ hensible, you will listen to me when I undertake to di-  
 “ rect your’s; and the more blameless I shall appear, the  
 “ less, I think, you will dare to undervalue my counsels.”  
 This is authoritative and manly.

His first reply is to the trifling objection of her name having been placed before his own. This, he says, was done agreeably to her own documents: for is not she become, by her religious profession, the spouse of God, and consequently his mistress and superior?—He then shews, in a long and rather puerile dissertation, what those virtues principally are, which should decorate the mystic spouse. She is typified in the black virgin of the Canticles, a form to which Heloisa, he observes, in the sable robes of her order, bears some resemblance. He descants on the qualities of negro-flesh, which, in some regards, he says, has peculiar attractions.—But I pretend not to understand the language of mysticism, which is always intricate, and sometimes seems to glow with indecent allusions.

To her second complaint, that by mentioning the danger to which his life was exposed, he had but added to her sorrows, he says: “ And was not this also done agreeably  
 “ to your own earnest request? I have your words in my  
 “ recollection, (and he cites them): why then complain,  
 “ that I have made you partake of my anxiety, when you  
 “ had forced me to relate it? Is it, whilst I hold my life in  
 “ suspense, that you would deem it expedient, to be in  
 “ gladness? In joy you would be my companion, but not  
 “ in sorrow. It is in adversity that the real friend is tried.  
 “ Let

“ Let me then hear no more of these expressions; silence  
 “ these wailings, which, in truth, are not the language of  
 “ sincere affection. Or, if this be not agreeable to you, per-  
 “ mit me, at least, surrounded as I am by dangers, to be  
 “ anxious for my soul’s good, and to make what provision,  
 “ I can, for another world. This foresight, if you really  
 “ love me, Heloisa, you can never censure.”—He tells her,  
 if she had any confidence in the divine mercies towards  
 him; that rather it would be her wish to see him freed  
 from present miseries, which were become intolerable; that  
 she must know, that he would be his benefactor, whose kind  
 hand should close his eyes: what then might be my fate,  
 says he, is uncertain, but I now know what I suffer: that  
 the termination of actual misery would, at all events, be a  
 happiness; and that they who truly love, look not to their  
 own advantage, but to the case of their friends. “ And  
 “ though their conversation, he goes on, give delight, they  
 “ would rather they should be absent, and be happy, than  
 “ be present, and be wretched. But even the poor com-  
 “ fort of my wretched presence cannot be allowed to you:  
 “ as then you have no interest in me, why wish me to live  
 “ in pain, than die to be happy? And could you draw any  
 “ advantage from the length of my misfortunes, would it  
 “ be the part of a friend or of an enemy to desire their  
 “ prolongation? The name of enemy does not please you,  
 “ I know; cease, therefore, from your unavailing lamen-  
 “ tations.”

On the third head he is very short. He applauds her  
 disapprobation of praise, which only makes her more de-  
 serving of it; he trusts, it is as sincerely in her mind, as it  
 was

BOOK V. was strongly marked in her letter: if so, says he, you are truly humble, nor will it be dissipated by my commendation: but he advises her to be on her guard, lest by seeming to decline praise, she should only court it the more, and make her mouth give the lie to the feelings of her heart. “ My praise, he observes, shall not elate you; it shall “ animate you in your advances to perfection. The more “ it is your wish to please me, with the greater ardour you “ will practise my instructions. I commend not your virtues, that you may glory in them: and observe that, as “ the censures of enemies are often too prejudiced, so are “ the commendations of our friends sometimes too partial “ to be relied on.”

In a more grave and solemn tone he then enters on her fourth charge: “ It remains, says Abeillard, that I examine “ more minutely what has long been the subject of your “ incessant complaints; I mean the circumstance, which “ drew us from the world. Here you accuse the ways of “ providence, when it would be more equitable to extol “ them. I had thought, indeed, that long ago this bitterness had been erased from your mind. The more dangerous it is, at once threatening the ruin of your soul “ and body, the more it merits pity, and the more it gives “ me pain. You declare, Heloise, that your only wish is “ to please me: quit then these baneful thoughts, that you “ may torment me no longer, that you may make me happy. “ With them you cannot please me; nor with them can “ you think to go along with me to happiness hereafter. “ You have professed a willingness to follow me even to the “ gates of misery, and will you let me go without you to “ those

“ those of endless joy?—Recollect what you once said; call  
 “ to mind the words of your last letter, that in the manner  
 “ of our conversion, and in the mode of God’s chastise-  
 “ ment, heaven had been rather propitious to me.”—He  
 then very fully discusses the subject, and enumerates some  
 circumstances of their former lives, which could only be  
 known to themselves, dwelling on his own excesses, which,  
 he thinks, very justly draw after them the vengeance of  
 heaven: every where, even in the acts of greatest severity,  
 he sees the paternal hand of mercy, working their mutual  
 salvation, and drawing good from evil.—The whole is in-  
 terspersed with many pious and apposite reflections, which  
 mark his resignation to providence, and the habits of a pe-  
 nitential and religious mind. Indelicacies there are, but  
 they are inseparable from the subject: Heloisa herself had  
 first moved them, and I can therefore pardon the good  
 abbot, who only continued the discussion.

If she be so much disposed to grieve, he then advises her  
 to turn her eyes to another object; and he recounts the  
 circumstances of our Saviour’s passion: this, he says, should  
 challenge all her tears. He extols the wonders of his love,  
 and he calls him her only true friend.—Again he turns his  
 view to the divine mercies, which had been so indulgent to  
 them both, and he concludes with a prayer, which he begs  
 she will often repeat for herself and for him.

There was now a pause in this interesting correspondence.  
 Abeillard had done his duty, and he waited with patience,  
 till an answer from the Paraclet should inform him, that  
 his letter had had its desired effect, and that Heloisa was  
 returned to a more composed and more fortunate disposition  
 of

## BOOK V.

of mind. She had received the letter, and was soon sensible from its perusal, that Abeillard was still her friend, that his judgment was better formed than her's, that his religion was more exemplary, that his virtue was more perfect, and that his general views of things were more comprehensive, and more adequate to the great designs of providence. She would not answer it immediately; she would permit its documents to operate on her heart; and when the effect should be more secure, she would once more write to her friend.

Mr. Pope's  
Heloisa.

As the elegant poem of Mr. Pope, according to his own declaration, was *partly extracted* from the foregoing letters, it will not be an unseasonable digression to bring it before the reader, on the present occasion. I know the fancy of a poet is not to be curbed, and he that should dare to do it, would infringe his best prerogative. It is the abuse only of this power which is censurable. Mr. Pope had read these famous letters; but I think, he had only read an unfaithful translation of them, which was published in French, at the end of the last century. In this translation the characters of the two lovers are depicted in the falsest colours. The reader, who is now, I hope, better acquainted with them, may perhaps be disposed to think with me, that our inimitable poet might have adhered more strictly to historical truth, without any danger of undue restraint, or without having deprived his composition of a single beauty. He that has known nothing of the real lives of Abeillard and Heloisa, may have read this poem, and admired it; but he read in the dark, and he admired from the mechanical impression which beauty makes upon the mind. It is rather a rhapsody,  
replete

replete with elegant diction, and the most delightful imagery, than a methodised composition: it wants order, an exact discrimination of ideas, and that accurate fitness of character and local objects, which the poet, on other occasions, so eminently possessed. I have seen a garden, into which, without much order, the most beautiful flowers of nature have been thrown, and of which the gardener's hand was not permitted to check the luxuriant growth, and this has sometimes brought to my recollection Mr. Pope's Heloisa.

The poem opens at the moment, when Heloisa had read Abeillard's letter to his friend, which had been put into her hands;

In these deep solitudes, &c.

But it was not love which first rose in her heart; it was pity for his sufferings, of which she had perused the sad story, and anxiety on account of the danger to which his life was hourly exposed. These sentiments, as circumstances stood, were far more natural than love.

The stir she then makes about the *dear fatal name*, is unmeaning, and in the true stile of a boarding-school Miss. The name of Abeillard was familiar to every mouth at the Paraclet, and the abbess doubtless was free to pronounce it, and to write it, when she pleased.

O write it not my hand!—&c.

Her design in writing was to inquire about his situation, and to ease her mind of thoughts, which gave her pain. This was laudable and seemly.

H h

The

## BOOK V.

The following passage, *Relentless walls!* &c. is beautifully poetical; but it ill accords with Heloisa's own account, or with the state of mind which the poet had himself given her. Are *rugged rocks* often found within the precincts of a convent; or could those of the Paraclet have been *worn by holy knees*, which till this moment, as Heloisa tells us, had been inhabited only by thieves and howling beasts, and where the name of God had never sounded?

Though cold like you, unmov'd, and silent grown:

Can hardly be applied to her, whom the poet has described, the slave of love and man.

I tremble too, whene'er my own I find:

It is remarkable that the name of Heloisa is only, I think, once mentioned in Abeillard's long epistle; she might therefore easily count the misfortunes which followed so close behind it. — Can it be said, when she entered the convent's solitary gloom, that *stern religion* there *quenched* the flame, which still burnt so furiously? Or that

There dy'd the best of passions, love and fame?

Is *fame* a passion?

Yet write, oh write me all, &c.

Can the reader possibly know what she wishes him to write? History indeed tells us, that she wished to hear of the perils which threatened his life; but of this the poet says nothing.

Incessantly



Incessantly he talks of his sighs, of his tears, of his grief, as if they sympathised with those of Heloisa; as if he also had been a forlorn and hapless lover. All the tears he shed were on his own account.

Heaven first taught letters, &c.

are charming lines, and improved from the thought of Heloisa.—So are the following

Thou know'st how guiltless first I met thy flame : &c.

They are highly descriptive, and drawn from the real circumstances of their situation. But as to *divine truths*, we know that few of them fell from his tongue on the ear of Heloisa. Their hours were not spent in learned dalliance.—In the two last lines of this paragraph is made a transition from the past to the present time, for the sake, it seems, of introducing a sentiment, at once incongruous in the gradation of passion, and extravagant in itself.

How oft, when press'd to marriage, &c.

Heloisa was, but once, pressed to marriage, and then, though reluctantly, she consented. The knot was soon after tied. Yet it must appear to the unlearned reader, from this passage, which contains the delightful description of disinterested love, and from others, that the lovers were never joined in wedlock :

No, make me mistress to the man I love!

H h 2

And

BOOK V. And how can such a preposterous wish be put into the mouth of Heloisa? She had then been the wife of Abeillard for many long years; and had she not been so; surely, all circumstances considered, it was a wild wish.—Much of this passage is taken from the original letter; but, as usual, the abbess of the Paraclet is made to utter the thoughtless sentiments of the romantic Heloisa, in her eighteenth year.

Canst thou forget that sad, that solemn Day,  
When victims at yon altar's foot we lay? &c.

On that sad day the altar of the Paraclet did not exist; nor were Abeillard and Heloisa either professed on the same day, or at the same place: one was at Argenteuil, the other at St. Denys. But the poet's description of this awful scene is truly admirable, and amply compensates for the errors of time and place; it is likewise not widely remote from the real event, as I described it in simple prose. Still Mr. Pope will have it, that her eyes were now fixed on Abeillard; and what is more incredible, he even makes her say that,

*Love* only was her call.

Could it be *love* that drew her *from* him to the cloister? Obedience, we know, it was, and an heroic submission to his imperious mandate.

From the ensuing lines, which are indecent, and no ways warranted by the real language of Heloisa, the poet, with an apparent shock, turns to more becoming sentiments:

Ah

Ah no! instruct me other joys to prize,  
With *other beauties* charm my partial eyes:

Why with *other beauties*, when before he had mentioned none?

Ah! think at least thy flock deserves thy care, &c.

The whole passage is almost literally taken from the letters; which shews, that the poet knew how to copy accurately, when it pleased his muse.

In these lone walls (their days eternal bound)  
These moss-grown domes with spiry turrets crown'd,  
Where awful arches make a noon-day night,  
And the dim windows shed a solemn light: &c.

Struck with this awful picture, we are not aware that it does not harmonise with the prosaic *plain roofs*, just mentioned, or with Paraclet's *white walls*. It is the description of an antique and venerable abbey: but the introduction of this gloomy scene was necessary, that Abeillard's eyes might diffuse their rays, and dispel the darkness.

See how the force of others pray'rs I try,  
(O pious fraud of am'rous charity!)

How was Abeillard to know that she had recourse to others prayers? But this line may be understood; its corresponding one can convey no idea to the most mystic conception: To beg the assistance of others prayers, on which Abeillard, in his letter, had so much insisted, is the fraud of *amorous charity*!

The

Poetry has nothing more beautiful than these lines. The most airy mind cannot read them without some pause of reflection. The personification of *melancholy* is awfully striking; and he that has been sad can tell, how often the inward gloom of his soul seemed to spread over every object, and to tinge the gayest scenes. Such were the silver springs and flowery meads of the Paraclet to the forlorn eye of Heloisa.

Ah wretch! believ'd the spouse of God in vain, &c.

The whole passage, which follows this line, is very nearly taken from that part of Heloisa's second letter, which I stiled her *lamentation*, and the reflections I there made, I wish may be applied to it. They will serve, perhaps, to reconcile the delicacy of some readers to a train of ideas, which, otherwise, must appear extremely reprehensible. Mr. Pope, whose pencil was ever charged with colours, has certainly heightened some expressions, and added of his own: for example;

Now turn'd to heav'n, I weep my past offence;  
Now think of thee, and curse my innocence.

How impious are these last words, and how unfairly do they represent the sorrowing mind of Heloisa! In bitterness she confessed her weaknesses, lamenting that still she was subject to them. Shall the poet, when he handles historic subjects, have no respect for truth of character, and only seek to please by such means, as his imagination may suggest?

How

How happy is the blameless vestal's lot? &c.

Can these lines be read without a wish of being this blameless vestal? I think; I have known nuns, to whom, in truth, each word might have been applied. In their innocence taken from the world; taught to believe that out of those walls all was sin and wickedness, and that within them religion, with every virtue, only dwelt; impressed with the awful idea, that they heard the voice of God calling them to the happy state: could there be minds better prepared for the ingress of that charming enthusiasm, which the poet has described?

Grace shines around her with serene beams,  
And whisp'ring angels prompt her golden dreams.  
For her th' unfading rose of Eden blooms,  
And wings of seraphs shed divine perfumes;  
For her the spouse prepares the bridal ring,  
For her white virgins Hymeneals sing;  
To sounds of heav'nly harps she dies away,  
And melts in visions of eternal day.

Such was not the state of Heloisa. The tumult of her mind, Mr. Pope then strongly contrasts with the serenity of his blameless vestal:

Far other dreams, &c.

He availed himself of a single line in the original; and out of it drew a descriptive scene, too glowing in its colouring, and too luscious in its imagery. How unguarded, in general, is the poet's pen, even when he pretends to admire virtue, and to be in love with innocence!

For

For thee the fates, severely kind, &c.

The transition is beautiful, from the troubled breast of Heloisa, to the *long dead calm* of Abeillard's mind. It is copied from the letters, the last lines excepted, which are in the happiest style of our poet:

Still as the sea, ere winds were taught to blow,  
Or moving spirit bade the waters flow; &c.

The following passage is also sufficiently justified by the original,

What scenes appear, where'er I turn my view? &c.

With this difference, however, that there it is simply narrative, and here poetry has profusely spread her most bewitching graces; there Heloisa bemoans the captive state of her soul, and here she recounts it with seeming complacency. So opposite is art to nature!

But with this departure from truth, (which, with the impression of his lines on my mind, I could not but have forgiven,) Mr. Pope was not satisfied: he proceeds in a description, which is all fictitious; and from an opening, gentle as the first dawns of grace, rises to a climax of passion, which terminates in raging phrenzy;

Snatch me, just mounting, from the blest abode;  
Assist the fiends, and tear me from my God!

She says to Abeillard. With reason has this passage been often censured as extremely reprehensible. And would his  
Heloisa

Heloisa have been less amiable, had she been less extravagant? In truth, I know not, how she could so soon have lost sight of the cold and lifeless Abeillard, she had just described; and the reflection should rather have checked this rant of passion. But as in tragic composition, every affection of the mind must be carried to its crisis, and there burst, so would not Mr. Pope quit his Heloisa, till he had extinguished in her every ray of that transcendent reason, which she so eminently possessed.

Happily, however, shocked at her own extravagance, she instantly exclaims;

No, fly me, fly me, far as pole from pole;  
Rise Alps between us! and whole oceans roll!

But the annexed ideas prove, that her understanding was still bewildered. *Ah, come not*: Abeillard was not disposed to come.—*Write not*: this was the very thing, she had so earnestly requested.—*Think not once of me*: it was a groundless solicitude:

Nor share one pang of all I felt for thee.

*Thy oaths I quit*: she was not free to break the matrimonial bond.

Forget, renounce me, hate whate'er was mine.

The reader, who knows what Abeillard's real dispositions had long been, and how much Heloisa complains of his ungrateful usage, will hardly relish the poet's opposition to the truth of history.

At last opens, in charming measure, the triumph of grace:

Oh grace serene! &c.

I am delighted with this return of reason, and to find again the Heloisa, repentant and guiltless, whom these pages have exhibited. I knew her not in the meretricious dress of the poet; yet awkward is her following attitude;

See in her cell sad Heloisa *spread*:

And it may be made a question, whether, *spread* as she is described, she could also, at the time, be *propt on some tomb*? —Mr. Pope likewise might have known that tombs are never raised in the cells of nuns: but it is clear, though he calls it a cell, that he has placed her in the cloisters, or rather in one of the ailes of the church.

Here, as I watch'd the dying lamps around,  
From yonder shrine I heard a hollow sound:  
"Come, Sister, come!" &c.

It is the invitation, which a fainted maid gives to the sad Heloisa; she calls her to *eternal sleep*: well therefore may she say that all here is *calm*;

That grief forgets to groan, and love to weep.

Though to *sleep* for ever be no enticing thought, yet is Heloisa ready to obey the call;

I come, I come! &c.

Still,



Still, turning to Abeillard, she begs he will pay the last sad office, and *catch her flying soul*; or rather, (which would be more in character, as he was a priest and an abbot,) that in *sacred vestments* he would stand by her side, and

BOOK V.

Teach me at once, and learn of me to die.

But as she speaks to Abeillard of her own death only, where is the propriety of the exclamation,

Oh death, all-eloquent! you only prove,  
What dust we doat on, when 'tis man we love?

This she might have said, hanging over the corse of her husband.

Then too, when fate shall thy fair frame destroy, &c.

One grave did unite them, as the sequel of this history will shew.—The conclusion of this admired poem proceeds in the same line of beauty: it is exquisitely affecting; and though we know, that Mr. Pope was never joined by fate in a *similitude of griefs* to Heloisa; though he never loved *so long, so well* as she, yet he was the bard to tell her sad and tender story;

The well-fung woes will sooth my penfive ghost.

I have ventured this short critique on Mr. Pope's Heloisa. Blemishes it certainly has, as a composition, only that they are lost to most eyes, in the dazzling glare of its beauties. But its moral imperfections are of a more serious nature.

BOOK V. Never, I believe, was there a more dangerous production. It presents poison to the hand of inexperienced youth, and the cup which holds it is all of burnished gold. It would have been well, I believe, for the common interests of virtue and innocence, had this seductive poem never seen the light.

The serious contents of Abeillard's last letter, tho' they had not wholly reformed the mind of Heloisa, which was not possible, yet had they greatly contributed to abate its too fervid tone. She felt herself more tranquil, and more resigned to heaven: this was the moment to answer his letter.

Heloisa's  
third letter.

“ That you may not have it in your power to charge me  
 “ with disobedience, says she, as you ordered me to check  
 “ the language of immoderate grief, I have done it: when  
 “ I write to you, my expressions shall be more temperate,  
 “ but, on other occasions, I cannot promise to refrain my  
 “ tongue. Nothing is less in a man's power than his own  
 “ mind: to obey it he is often forced, and seldom can he  
 “ command its operations. The sudden impulse of strong  
 “ affections cannot be at once repressed; their effects are  
 “ visibly marked on the countenance, and they announce  
 “ themselves in words, which are their readiest vehicle.  
 “ From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.  
 “ But even when my tongue shall be ungovernable, I will  
 “ keep my hand in subjection: it would be well, if the  
 “ mind which grieves were as subservient to my voice.—To  
 “ restore my mind to serenity, is not, I fear, in your  
 “ power; but you can moderate its sorrow. One thought  
 “ is banished by another. The chain of gloomy meditation  
 “ is

“ is broken, when new objects arise to engage the attention;  
 “ and the more honourable, or expedient, or interesting  
 “ these may appear, the more intense will be their impres-  
 “ sion, and the more will the mind turn aside from trou-  
 “ ble.”

With this view, she proposes to Abeillard two subjects, on which she would wish him to enter. The first was the origin of the monastic institute, as it related to nuns; and the second, the ordaining of a rule solely adapted to women, which should be received at the Paraclet. This, she observes, had not hitherto been done; in consequence of which, all that engaged in the monastic life, men or women, were obliged to practise the same rule; which, through the whole Latin church, was that of St. Bennet. She then examines this famous rule, and shews, in how many instances, its practices and forms are incompatible with the habits and dispositions of women; for whom therefore, she determines, it could not have been primarily intended. “ But then,  
 “ cries she, how ridiculous, and even presumptuous, to  
 “ bind ourselves, by a solemn engagement, to an institute,  
 “ which we can neither understand nor practise. Prudence  
 “ is the mother of all virtues, and by reason must our con-  
 “ duct be ever regulated: these are the only basis of what-  
 “ ever may be termed laudable or religious. Before a bur-  
 “ den be laid on, the strength of the shoulders must be tried,  
 “ which are to support it.”

Even St. Bennet himself, she notices, had wisely modelled his rule, agreeably to the circumstances of the times, and the dispositions of his subjects: what then would he not have done, had he been employed to give laws to the weaker sex?

For

BOOK V. For this sex, she thinks, it would be enough, not to aim, in their religious institutes, at a higher perfection, than what is practised by the ministers of the church; even it would be well, could they emulate the virtues of the pious laity. “Would to God, she goes on, we were only able, “by our best exertions, to fulfill the the gospel precepts, “and not to surpass them; that we did not aspire to be “more than christians!”—From the greater sobriety of women, which arises, Heloisa remarks, from the nature of their constitutions, she draws an argument to prove, that they should be under no restriction in the use of what they may chuse to eat or drink. The world, she says, is visibly grown old, and its inhabitants possess no longer that strength of texture, which belonged to their progenitors: rules, therefore, which were enacted for the good of man, should vary as he varies: owing to this observation, she says, it was, that St. Bennet indulged his monks with the use of wine.—“At all events, continues she, why be solicitous “about things, which are so indifferent in themselves; which “the finner and the faint may equally practise. Let sin be “prohibited; but let us have every other indulgence possible.” She proceeds to discuss the nature of external observances, which she treats as things of no value. Virtue alone, she says, has merit before heaven; the true christian is solely occupied in perfecting his moral character; it is from the will that evil flows, and not from what is external to it.

She concludes: “But it is now, Sir, your duty to make “such regulations for us, as may be binding on the Paraclet “for ever. You, under God, are the founder of this house.

“ house. When you are gone, we may have a teacher, who  
 “ may be disposed to build on another foundation. For us,  
 “ we fear, he may be less solicitous, or we may be less at-  
 “ tentive to him: should he be willing to serve us, as you  
 “ are, he may not be equally capable. Do you speak to us,  
 “ and we will listen. Farewell.”

The sound judgment and enlarged views of Heloisa are eminently conspicuous throughout this letter. Her's are not the ideas of a woman, narrowed by a cloistered education. She had studied, with much attention, the character of her sex; the design and nature of the monastic institute she had freely viewed; the real precepts and duties of christianity she had cautiously discriminated from human inventions, and from those external works, on which too many rely; and she had convinced herself that it was preposterous to aim at the high flights of romantic piety, while those virtues are over-looked as insufficient; on which alone the true spirit of the gospel rests. She proposed that her nuns should aspire to perfection, by the practice only of the domestic virtues; that they should strive to be happy in the society of one another; that their tempers should not be soured by corporal macerations, or the infliction of humiliating chastisements; and that enjoying the comforts of a sound mind, with a constitution invigorated by proper nourishment, they should be able to improve their understandings by study, to sing the praises of their maker with alacrity and perseverance, and to edify their neighbours by a display of virtues, which it is equally the duty of every christian citizen to practise.

Abeillard

## BOOK V.

Abeillard's  
answer.

Abeillard undertook to make a very full reply to the two principal questions proposed by Heloisa. He was pleased to find that her mind began to turn from the thoughts, which had oppressed it, and that it would be bent on enquiries, from which improvement and instruction might be drawn, and on which also he himself would have an opportunity of exercising his authority, and of displaying his erudition.—He first treats of the origin of the female monastic institute, which he deduces from the earliest times: it began, he says, with Christ, and his immediate successors. He pursues the subject into its various branches, adducing authorities from Pagan, Jewish, and christian sources, to prove that women, with their virtues, were ever the first favourites of heaven, and that by men they were, at all times, held in the highest estimation.—It is a loose and uninteresting dissertation, into which, without order, he seems to have thrown whatever he could collect on the subject. The ladies of the Paraclet might be pleased with the flattering encomium on their sex: in every other view, it has little merit.

On the second part he is even more diffuse: he enumerates the three leading virtues, which belong to the cloister, continence, poverty, and silence, and he dwells on each of them. He then specifies the constitutions, which Heloisa had requested, which are to regulate the internal and external œconomy of the Paraclet, in the distribution of their hours, in the form and quality of their dress, and in the nature and quantity of their food. There is much good sense in all these arrangements, and had they been delivered in a more simple and didactic style, they would even now be read

read with pleasure. He shews that indulgence to the weaknesses of human nature, on which the abbess had so strongly insisted, and the perfection he requires is rather to be drawn from an universal moderation and abstemiousness, than from any particular practices of fasting and penitence: on this head, they are to observe the established laws of the church.—I am not sufficiently acquainted with the rules of the different monastic orders of women, to say how far these constitutions of Abeillard may depart from the usual form: I believe, however, there is little that is new in them, unless they be compared with those more rigid institutes, which, some years after, the seraphic zeal of other founders introduced into the church.

And here, as far as history informs us, closes the epistolary correspondence betwixt Abeillard and Heloisa. The good abbot had reason to be satisfied with the result of his endeavours; and Heloisa, we may not doubt, from this time, became a happier woman. To reduce into practice the documents, she had received, and to adapt them to the genius and dispositions of the house, over which she presided, would now be her principal care. The occupation, as she had herself observed, would engage her attention, and the anxious troubles of her mind, indulged no longer, would give way to better thoughts.—How the reform at St. Gildas went on, we are not told, nor do we read any more of the persecutions and complaints of their abbot. A great part of his time must have been given to writing, which was chiefly dedicated to the nuns of the Paraclet. I will speak of these works.

## BOOK V.

Other works  
of Abeillard.

The first of them seems to have been an address to the Paraclet<sup>1</sup>, in which he exhorts the nuns to the study of the holy scriptures. He speaks much of the learning, of the conduct, and of the example of St. Jérôme, who had deemed it no unworthy office to attend to the education of women. The old man had sketched out the first elementary lines for his favourite Paula, and he promises to become her master and her play-fellow, if necessary; that he will carry her on his shoulders, that he will help her to form her first words, and that he shall take more glory in it, than did Aristotle in the tutorage of Alexander. Abeillard could not be ashamed to tread in the steps of this great man.—He strongly recommends the study of the Greek and Hebrew languages, as essentially necessary to the due understanding of the sacred writers, and he talks much of the great imperfection of all translations. “ You, says he to the nuns, are inexcusable, “ if you neglect to acquire this important learning: you “ have no long journeys to make in quest of it, no expences “ to incur. In Heloise you have a mistress, who can suffice for all: virtue she will teach you by example, and “ literature by precept. Versed in Latin, and not unskilled “ in the Hebrew and Greek languages, she alone, at this “ time, seems to possess that knowledge, which in the “ blessed Jérôme was so much extolled.”—Happy, he says, is that person, who, turning over the divine volumes, can draw their sense from the purest source, and who is not necessitated to recur to muddy streams, which are so ill qualified to allay his thirst. But he laments that, with the study of the ancient languages, all knowledge of them had long been

<sup>1</sup> Op. Abeil. p. 251.



been lost, excepting what, to the shame of the other sex, still remained with the abbess of the Paraclet.—He concludes this not inelegant address, by again pressing them to the most serious studies; that this they can do with more ease than the monks, because they are less engaged in manual labour; and he advises them to beware, lest the enemy, in their indolence, or in the weakness of their sex, lay snares for their virtue.

The nuns, as we shall see, were animated by this address: they took the advice of their master; Heloisa shewed the way; and they entered on the new career which was opened to them. They studied the learned languages, and they read the scriptures. Envious would be the conventual life, were it always so employed! But they found many difficulties, which grew on them as they advanced; (for it is only to the superficial and vain enquirer that the sense of the inspired word is always plain and intelligible,) and these difficulties they laid before their abbess. Some she could remove; but others, as became her, she acknowledged, lay not within the limits of her humble comprehension. As these impediments multiplied, they were disturbed, and they pursued their labours with less alacrity. Heloisa then advised them to note down, every day, such difficulties as in their reading should occur, and when they rose to any bulk, she promised to send them to Abeillard for his solution. Thus was formed that collection of *Problems*, which is in the works of Abeillard<sup>k</sup>.

They are preceded by a preface written by Heloisa, wherein she states the circumstances, I have mentioned, and

<sup>k</sup> Op. Abeil. p. 384.

BOOK V. are forty-two in number: to each problem is immediately subjoined Abeillard's solution.—The questions are proposed in a very succinct and accurate manner, and some of them are such, as have ever given trouble to the most sagacious commentators. The replies are often diffuse and desultory, and seldom seem to reach the difficulty: he indulges his taste in forced and figurative interpretations, and when the problem presses hard has recourse to mystery. His answer to the last difficulty is a casuistical discussion of matters, the like to which, probably, was never laid before a convent of nuns. It is wantonly assumed, as the question related to no such subject: vanity or pruriency of imagination therefore must have suggested the unseemly digression.

The next work I find, is a body of *Sermons*, on the principal festivals of the year, mostly written for the use of the Paraclet<sup>1</sup>. Heloisa had begged them from him, and for that reason, he says, he had composed them. “I am not used, he observes to her, to this stile of composition: I aim at no eloquence, but in plain language to express my thoughts. And, perhaps, the more homely this expression be, the better it is adapted to common understanding: to them my simple language may have the recommendation of elegance, and what they conceive most easily, they may relish best.”—Notwithstanding this humble declaration, I discover no marks of negligence or want of art in the sermons: they are some of his best compositions, though they contain nothing very new or interesting. Nor was it at all necessary, he should have studied any peculiar simplicity of diction in his addresses to the Paraclet: the  
nuns

<sup>1</sup>Op. Abeil. p. 729.

nuns of this house, as already noticed, were singularly learned. BOOK V.

As an additional proof that they were so, it may be observed, that these sermons, designed for their instruction, were written in Latin, which, though at that time more generally understood than at present, had long ceased to be the vulgar language. The ancient Gaulish, or French, as we learn from the monuments of the times, was then in common use. On the festivals, to which they belonged, these sermons were read publicly in the church of the Paraclet<sup>m</sup>.

His treatise against *Heresies*, which were the errors of the age, is not incurious; as it shews us, not only what those errors were, but likewise points out the doctrine of the church, as believed in the twelfth century. This is an important link in the great chain of tradition, which we hold in our hands, tracing its easy progress from ourselves up to those times, when the principles of christianity were first promulgated.—Abeillard, in this work, briefly states the error, and then combats it by the authorities of revelation. These authorities are not always convincing, but they were the popular arguments of the day.—He seems to have been extremely well versed in scripture learning; which proves that, even in the darkest ages, those sacred volumes were not neglected, and that the Reformation, as is pretended, was not a providential arrangement to rescue them from the disgrace and oblivion, in which they had been sunk. We have seen how strongly their study was recommended to the Paraclet, and with what attention they were there read and investigated.

<sup>m</sup> Præf. Apolog,

BOOK V. investigated: or were Abeillard and his nuns the only biblical students of the age? The contrary is well known.

Abeillard also wrote an *Exposition* of the Lord's prayer, which is familiar, concise, and instructive; and another of the Apostle's creed, which has equal merit<sup>n</sup>. It was when he aimed at superior learning and allegorical comments, that his writings are unsatisfactory: his genius was naturally clear and penetrating, and left to itself, without all doubt, it would have thrown great light on the abstrusest enquiries: but when the hemisphere is overcast, what eye looks for the brightness of a meridian sun?

But the abbot's very principal work is a *Commentary* on the epistle to the Romans, in five books<sup>o</sup>. Contrary to the whimsical taste of the age, which ran into playful allegories, the author here attaches himself to the literal sense, and by an easy paraphrase, endeavours to point out the chain of reasoning of the apostle, and the connection of his discourse. This he has executed very ably. He introduces dissertations on the most knotty points of theology, such as original sin, free will, grace, and predestination, and he shews at least that he possessed a metaphysical aptitude for the discussion of such matters. There is much erudition throughout the whole commentary, and an extensive knowledge of the writings of the ancient fathers.—To the head of the work is prefixed a short introduction, wherein he treats of the scriptures in general: “ And as the design of the four  
“ gospels, says he, is to teach those things which every  
“ christian must know, so were the epistles written to incul-  
“ cate a strict attention and obedience to them; yet do  
“ these

<sup>n</sup> Op. p. 59.

<sup>o</sup> Ibid. p. 491.

“ these also contain some wholesome documents and advice, BOOK V.  
 “ which, though they appertain not to the essence of be-  
 “ lief, may serve to develope its tenets, and to embellish  
 “ the christian establishment.”

It was about this time, that Bernard of Clairvaux, to whose acquaintance I have already introduced the reader, made a visit to the Paraclet.—From the time we left him, newly elected abbot, and growing, by his virtues and his talents, into universal renown, he had been engaged in the most arduous concerns of Europe. Drawn reluctantly from his cell, he assisted at the council of Troyes, where he received the commission to settle the rule of the military order of Templars, just established.—At Estampes before the king, the great dispute between Innocent and Anacletus, both chosen popes of Rome, was referred to Bernard: he weighed the important matter, and decided in favour of the first, whose election, he said, was canonical. The assembly approved his decision. He then wrote circular letters to many princes and bishops in favour of Innocent.—In 1131 he refused the bishopric of Chalons, and also that of Genoa. Three years after he was in Italy, where he assisted at the council of Pisa, and was the soul of every process: his levee was crowded by bishops, and the whole power of the church seemed vested in his hands; yet was his humility more transcendent than the applause which echoed round him.—Returning from Pisa, by the command of his Holiness, he passed by Milan. The Milanese came out to meet him; they threw themselves at his feet, imploring his benediction; they cut shreds from his garments, in attestation of his sanctity; and with the loudest acclamations they introduced

St. Bernard  
visits the Pa-  
raclet.

BOOK V. introduced him into their city. During his stay among them, extraordinary indeed are the miracles, he is said to have worked in their favour. Every disorder gave way to the efficacy of his prayers. The neighbouring towns and villages were emptied of their inhabitants, and all Lombardy was in motion to see this man of wonders. The constant press, which curiosity or devotion thus thickened round him, was too violent to be borne; he resisted their solicitations in vain, and withdrew from the crowd; but he was soon compelled to shew himself from the windows to the people, and from thence to give them his benediction.—In the midst of this overpowering tide of plaudits and admiration, Bernard stood confused; he acknowledged his own unworthiness, and the glory of his miracles he gave to God and to the faith of the people. They offered him the archiepiscopal mitre of their city, which was vacant; he refused it, and retired.—Soon after we find him at Clairvaux, occupied in building a new monastery, as the old one was found too small to contain the great number of monks, who daily crowded to him<sup>p</sup>.

What was the motive of his visit to the Paraclet, we are not told. Probably he was curious to see a woman, about whose endowments fame spoke so loudly. We know, indeed, that he had been long pressed to go<sup>q</sup>; for Heloisa and her nuns could not have heard with indifference, that so great a treasure resided, not many miles from their convent. They received him as an angel from heaven. He admired the regularity of their discipline, and he was charmed with the deportment and learned conversation of the abbess and her

<sup>p</sup> Fleury vol. xiv.

<sup>q</sup> Op. p. 244.

her sisters. With an engaging attention he read and approved the rules of their institute; and more than once he publicly preached to them, with that unction and imposing eloquence, which were so much his own. Never was there a sacred orator, who, by a soft manner, a pathetic diction, and a gentle flow of glowing ideas, understood so well every approach to the heart. But he was not of a temper to approve, where he saw cause for reprehension; and the most trifling deviation from the established forms of the church was enough to excite his censure. He observed that, in the Lord's prayer, instead of *daily* bread, they used the word *super substantial*. The novelty struck him, and he enquired, by what authority it had been introduced? The abbess informed him, that Abeillard, the founder of their house, and their guide in religion, had so permitted it.—The reader will recollect that Bernard, long before, had been irritated against the abbot of St. Gildas: he therefore, on this occasion, treated his name with some asperity, and he told Heloisa, that the innovation was very censurable.

Not long after, some very pressing business obliged Abeillard to go over to the Paraclete. He was told with much exultation of the visit he had had; that they had impatiently longed to see him; that he was a divine man; and that when he had spoken to them on the truths of religion, they had heard, they thought, the voice of an angel. Such warm encomiums would not be so pleasing, probably, to the ears of Abeillard. The abbess had equally admired the man of God; but she was not blind in her admiration, nor could she sacrifice an old friend to the imposing

<sup>r</sup> Op. p. 244.

<sup>r</sup> Ibid.

BOOK V. character of the young abbot of Clairvaux. In conversing therefore with Abeillard she, one day, with some address, told him of the remark, Bernard had made, on their use of the word *superfubstantial*, and she added: “ The holy man  
 “ is much your admirer; he praised your institute, and he  
 “ applauded the discipline of our convent: that one thing  
 “ only he could not approve, and he charged you with in-  
 “ novation.”—Abeillard was little pleased with the flattery, as he saw it proceeded from the conciliating mind of Heloisa; but the censure stung him, and he thought he could be revenged.

Returned into Britany, he had soon prepared a letter for the abbot of Clairvaux. “ Having heard at the Paraclet,  
 “ says he, that you had censured me, it was natural I  
 “ should be anxious to apologise for my conduct: it is your  
 “ displeasure, which I should be more sorry to incur, than  
 “ that of all the rest of mankind.”—He then shews, that the Lord’s prayer is only to be found in the two gospels of Matthew and Luke: that Matthew received his from the mouth of his master Christ, and that Luke was only instructed by St. Paul, who could know nothing, but by report, of the substance of our Saviour’s discourses; consequently the prayer of the former, which was in itself more full and perfect, was to be preferred to that of Luke.—He lays before him the two prayers, the one composed of seven, the other of five, petitions; and he observes, that it was the superior excellence of the one, which had given it the preference in the public service of the church. “ How  
 “ then has it happened, continues Abeillard, that into the  
 “ prayer of Matthew should have been foisted the word  
 “ *daily*



“ *daily* of Luke, when its own *superfubstantial* was more BOOK V.  
 “ expreffive and appofite? It is no fmall prefumption, it  
 “ feems, thus to alter the expreffion of an apoftle, as if he  
 “ did not himfelf fufficiently underftand the import of  
 “ words.”—He adduces the authority of the Greek church,  
 which adheres to the reading of Matthew, though Luke  
 wrote his gofpel in their own language.—“ If I am not  
 “ egregioufly miftaken then, fays he, rather accufe me of  
 “ any thing, than of innovation or arrogance in this bufi-  
 “ nefs; me, who fcrupuloufly chufe to follow the lan-  
 “ guage of Chrift and his apoftle, and the evident testi-  
 “ mony of the Greek church.”—“ But obferve, he goes  
 “ on, I lay no commands on any one; I even perfuade  
 “ no one, to follow me, and to depart from the vulgar  
 “ practice. Let each one reft on his own judgment.  
 “ This only is my advice, that he be cautious not to  
 “ prefer forms to reafon, and practice to venerable  
 “ truth.”

Having proceeded thus far in his own vindication,  
 which is manly and perfuafive, he fuddenly turns on his  
 adverfary, and attacks him with fpirit: “ And is it not  
 “ this fame reafon, fays he, of which you yourfelves are  
 “ fo vehemently enamoured, as to dare to fupport it  
 “ againft the univerfal practice of the church? You are  
 “ but men of yefterday; yet glorying in the novelty  
 “ of your order, you have made decrees, by which the  
 “ divine fervice is to be performed among you, different-  
 “ ly from the ancient, and all the modern, ufages of  
 “ monks and churchmen. Nor in this do you deem  
 “ yourfelves reprehenfible. It may be a fingularity, or

BOOK V. “ a deviation from antiquity, you allow; but it accords  
“ with reason and the tenor of your institute; and while  
“ this is so, little do you value the astonishment, or the  
“ murmurs, of discontented spectators.”—He enumerates  
a long list of the peculiarities, observed by the Cisterian  
monks in their church service, which he treats as absurdities,  
or at best, as puerile singularities, to which, however, they  
profess the warmest attachment, and in which he is not  
disposed to give them the smallest disturbance. Variation,  
he observes, has ever been allowed in language and in general  
discipline; and he instances many practices which then  
prevailed, all which were permitted, provided only the sacred  
integrity of faith were not violated. It is here that unity must  
be fixed. This variety, he thinks, in the modes of worshipping  
our maker, has its advantages; and that too fervile an  
uniformity may sometimes generate disgust. For this, in part,  
it was that the religion of Christ was preached in the languages  
of all nations; and he himself delivered the prayer in question,  
in two distinct forms, that different dispositions might find  
their satisfaction in them: but let us repeat it, says he, in the  
exact words of its august founder. He concludes: “ Let each  
“ one, as I said before, be guided by his own judgment,  
“ and pray as he likes it best. I advise no one to follow  
“ me; he may vary the words of Christ at will: but it shall  
“ be my endeavour to keep them and their genuine sense  
“ as unchanged as may be.”

‘Op. p. 250

There

There is much good sense in these observations; and I have been more particular in recounting the transaction, as it may serve hereafter to account more fully for the violent conduct of Bernard towards the unfortunate abbot of St. Gildas. How he received this spirited address, we know not; but even faints, we have reason to think, are sometimes subject to the common feelings of human nature.

BOOK V.

END OF THE FIFTH BOOK.



THE  
H I S T O R Y  
OF THE LIVES OF  
ABEILLARD and HELOISA.

B O O K VI.

*William of St. Thierry accuses Abeillard—The abbot of Clairvaux engages in the quarrel—The council of Sens—Sentence against Abeillard—He sets out for Rome—Is entertained at Cluni, and consents to remain there—Arnold of Brescia—Tanchelm of Antwerp—Henry de Bruys.*

Anno, 1139.

ALMOST twenty years had now elapsed, since BOOK VI.  
Abeillard, in the council of Soissons, had been compelled, unheard, to throw his work on the *Trinity* into the flames. I related the event in all its circumstances. From that time he had continued to teach, and he had published different works. They were received with approbation, and were very generally read. So arbitrary had been judged the behaviour of the synod towards him, that  
it

BOOK VI. it had left no stigma on his reputation; even the obnoxious work itself made its own way, unopposed, and seemed to promise an increase of fame to its author,

William of  
St. Thierry  
accuses  
Abeillard.

The holy Bernard had a friend, whom he much esteemed, William, abbot of St. Thierry, in the neighbourhood of Reims. Whether William had heard of the sharp letter, which Abeillard had lately addressed to the abbot of Clairvaux, or was jealous of the applause which followed his writings, or, poring with a malignant eye over his works, he thought he had discovered errors, which it was his duty to reveal; whatever might be his motive, he determined again to blow the embers, and to revive a controversy, which the lapse of years had extinguished<sup>a</sup>.—There are men, to whom *orthodoxy* is a word so imposing, that to support it they can adopt measures, which religion, reason, and honour must ever view with disgust.

Geoffrey, bishop of Chartres, and Bernard of Clairvaux, were the two, whose zeal if he could rouse, William doubted not, but importance would be given to his undertaking. Geoffrey, it may be remembered, was the learned and benevolent prelate who, at the council of Soissons, had shewed himself so well affected to the persecuted Abeillard. Why he, on this occasion was fixed on, is uncertain; possibly the abbot of St. Thierry, who knew how highly his abilities were rated in the French church, might be ignorant of his personal attachments. Be this as it may; he drew up a very acrimonious and pointed letter, which he addressed to the venerable persons, just mentioned. “ Peter Abeillard, “ says he, again begins to teach his novelties and to write  
“ them:”

<sup>a</sup>Vie d'Abeil. p. 80.

“ them: his works cross the seas, nor are the Alps any BOOK VI.  
 “ obstacle to their progress: his wild opinions deluge the  
 “ provinces; they are publicly taught, and as publicly  
 “ defended: it is even said, that they have found admirers  
 “ in the court itself of Rome. I must therefore be open  
 “ with you: your silence is dangerous to yourselves, and  
 “ it is dangerous to the church of God.—Very lately a  
 “ work of this man fell into my hands: it was entitled the  
 “ *Theology of Abeillard*. I confess, the words excited my  
 “ curiosity; I read it; and as many things therein struck  
 “ me, I noted them down, with the reasons why I did so.  
 “ These remarks I now send you, and with them the book  
 “ itself. Form your own judgments. It is you only whom  
 “ I can with propriety address on this occasion. He fears  
 “ you. But if you remain silent, whom will he fear? And,  
 “ if he fear no one, what shall stem the torrent of his  
 “ tongue? Abeillard was once my friend; but when the  
 “ sacred deposit of faith is exposed to danger, the name  
 “ of friend or parent weighs no longer with me<sup>b</sup>.”—He  
 then enumerates the thirteen propositions, which he had  
 extracted from the works of Abeillard, and which he pro-  
 nounces to be thirteen heresies.

The bishop of Chartres returned no answer to this letter;  
 but Bernard replied in a manner which could not be very  
 satisfactory to the meddling accuser. “ I applaud your  
 “ zeal, said he: but you know, how little, in matters of  
 “ this delicate nature, I rely on my own judgment. It will  
 “ be proper that we proceed with caution: let us meet,  
 “ and discuss the business together. But even this, on

<sup>b</sup> Ep. Bern. n. 326.

BOOK VI. "account of the holy time of lent, cannot be done as yet.  
 "Excuse, I beg you, this delay, which is the more necessary,  
 "as till now I have been a stranger to almost every  
 "thing you have communicated to me<sup>c</sup>."

Dissatisfied with this cold reply, and to urge the business more rapidly forward, William composed a more voluminous work on the subject, in which he placed his charges in a stronger light, marked more emphatically the errors of Abeillard, and seemed to triumph in a surer conquest. This likewise he sent to Bernard and the bishop. So earnest indeed was he become in the prosecution, that to carry it on with more expedition, he reluctantly suspended a large comment on the canticles of Salomon, in which the pious affections of his heart were very warmly engaged<sup>d</sup>.

Unfortunately for Abeillard, just at this critical moment, died the bishop of Chartres. He was his friend; and as his learning and his virtues were much looked up to, probably he would have had it in his power to check the flagrant zeal of his adversaries.

The abbot of  
 Clairvaux  
 engages in  
 the quarrel.

The abbot of Clairvaux perused the new treatise, which had been sent him; and though he seems to have been persuaded that the charges against Abeillard were well founded, yet, wishing rather to reclaim than to irritate him, he purposed to meet him, and amicably to canvass the matter in a private interview. This was benevolent and ingenuous; but it could not be that their meeting should produce any permanent good. The minds of both had been exulcerated; nor were their natural dispositions much formed to coalesce. They met, however. Abeillard, now in years, fore from  
 ill

<sup>c</sup> Ep. Bern. n. 326.

<sup>d</sup> Vie d'Abeil. p. 83.



ill usage, and confident in the powers of his learning, would view the young abbot as an officious intruder, who came, not so much to conciliate, or to seek for information, as to arraign authoritatively his conduct, and to weigh his opinions in the scale of prejudice: and when he recollected Soissons, and the judgment there passed, though arbitrarily, on his works, he would consider the present step as an attempt malevolently aimed at his repose.—Bernard declared the motives which had brought him, and he recapitulated, with some diffidence, the list of errors with which he had been charged: these errors he entreated him to retract, and then he promised, that all his influence should be used to mitigate the severity of any sentence, which his judges might be disposed to pronounce.—Abeillard, with a haughtiness, which was not misplaced, heard the remonstrance, and withdrew in silent contempt. The saint therefore called on some of his friends, and with them a second time waited on the abbot of St. Gildas. It was in vain: they found him equally untractable, and in a peremptory tone he told them, that they were free to take their own measures, and that he should take his<sup>e</sup>.

The author of Bernard's life relates this transaction very differently: he says, that Abeillard was so affected by the manner, in which his master addressed him, that he promised to correct his errors, and to conform to his will in all things: but that, no sooner were they parted, than, instigated by the bad advice of his friends, and confident of his learning, he receded from his purpose, and again denounced defiance<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>e</sup> Ep. Bern. 337.

<sup>f</sup> Lib. iii. c. 5.

BOOK VI. The abbot of Clairvaux, disappointed by the bad success of his interview, provoked by the behaviour of Abeillard, and warmed by an impetuous zeal, (which in holy men is the more dangerous, because it is believed to be suggested by the spirit of God,) resolved, as moderation had miscarried, that violence should try its efficacy: he would exert against the weak man every nerve of that unbounded influence, which the fame of his sanctity, his eloquence, and his extensive connections in the world, had given him. He wrote to Innocent the pope, and to the Roman prelates, charging Abeillard with every heresy, which hitherto had disfigured the church of God, and with every bad design, which could animate the breast of the most profligate mortal.

To the Cardinal Guido, who had been the scholar of Abeillard, and whose partiality for his old master he apprehended might stand in the way of his designs, he says: “ I should indeed do you an injury, were I to imagine that your regard for any one could go so far, as to raise in your breast an esteem for his errors. Such love is earthly, it is brutal, and diabolical, equally pernicious to both parties.—Abeillard introduces into his writings a profane novelty of ideas and of language: he discourses on faith to overthrow its mysteries, and the words of the gospel he adopts to impugn its tenets. He, forsooth, sees nothing obscurely, his eye penetrates the darkest secrets: it would be well, however, if he knew himself. I accuse him not before the heavenly father: his own book is his accuser. When he speaks of the Trinity, we hear Arius; when of grace, Pelagius; and when of the person of Christ, Nestorius.”

To

To another Cardinal he uses the same intemperate language: "Abeillard, he says, is a monk without a rule, is a superior without care, nor has discipline or order the least check over him. He is a man ever varying from himself; interiorly a Herod, exteriorly a Baptist: he is ambiguous as a riddle, possessing nothing of a monk, but the name and the habit. But what is this to me? Each one must answer for himself. One thing there is, which I cannot dissemble; it appertains to all who love the name of Christ. He proclaims iniquity in the streets; he corrupts the integrity of faith, and the purity of the church. Disputing and writing on faith, on the sacraments, and on the Trinity, he overleaps the bounds which our fathers placed: as he wills, he changes, he multiplies, and he diminishes. In his works and actions he proves himself the fabricator of lies, and the worshipper of false doctrines: he is an heretic not in error only, but in obstinacy and in the defence of error. He knows all things in heaven and on earth, save only himself. Before the legate of the Roman see, with his work he was condemned at Soissons. But as if that sentence were not enough, again he exposes himself to censure, and the last error becomes worse than the former. Secure, however, he thinks himself, because he can boast that Cardinals and Roman prelates have been his scholars; them, whom he should have feared as his judges, he dares to call the protectors of his past and present errors<sup>b</sup>."

<sup>b</sup> Bern. Ep. 336.

## BOOK VI.

The same means of defamation he used at home, decrying the principles and person of Abeillard, and holding up both to the ridicule and detestation of the whole French church<sup>1</sup>.

Upon what principles of morality or honour this conduct of Bernard can be justified, I know not. Had Abeillard been guilty of more errors than were laid to his charge, and had his behaviour been reprehensible as he described it: still is the worst enemy of God or man to be treated with language so foul, so insulting, and so unchristian? But Abeillard, in truth, was not guilty of a single error, nor was he obstinate in defending a single opinion, and the universal tenor of his life was religious, penitential, and exemplary.

The abbot of St. Gildas could not long be ignorant of these violent proceedings of his enemy, (for they were echoed through every province, and from kingdom to kingdom,) and he saw the necessity of opposing some obstacle to their further spread. Should he be longer silent, there was an end of his reputation for ever, nor would his person be hardly secure within the walls of his own convent. But what ground could he take that would be tenable against the commanding powers of the abbot of Clairvaux? He could call to his assistance all the interest of the earth, and the angels of heaven were obedient to his beck. However, innocent, he knew, he was, and he would try once more what those arms could do, with which formerly, in the schools of Paris, he had fought and conquered. He recollected that Samson, the stout Nazarean, though forlorn, and old, and surrounded by his enemies, was not deserted by his native strength, and that even when he fell he triumphed.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 337.

At Sens, an archiepiscopal city in Champagne, was to be performed the ceremony of the translation of a faint's body into the cathedral church. To grace the solemn pageant, all the bishops of the diocese with their clergy were to assemble; as likewise those from the neighbouring district of Reims. The king also, it was said, would honour the meeting with his presence.—Abeillard judged this might be a proper occasion for the public justification of his principles, and that from hence the kingdom might soon learn, that he was orthodox in his opinions, and irreproachable in his conduct: nor did he despair of being able to draw down some confusion on his enemies. He therefore waited on the archbishop of Sens; he laid before him the motives of his journey, and he implored his protection. “The abbot of Clairvaux, said he, declaims against my writings: I am ready to defend them in public assembly, and I request that he be cited to appear before you. I will meet him.” The archbishop could but approve of a proposal which was ingenuous and equitable, and he assured Abeillard that, as far as it lay in his power, justice should be done him<sup>k</sup>. Nor is it improbable, that he might be pleased with the prospect of an important controversy, which would give some relief to the main ceremony, and in which he, with his suffragan bishops, should sit as judges.

Agreeably to his design, he wrote to St. Bernard, acquainting him of Abeillard's complaint and challenge, and naming the day on which he should expect to see him at Sens. The good abbot refused to appear, and he grounded his refusal on this reasoning: that he was young and inexperienced

<sup>k</sup> Fleury vol. xiv.

BOOK VI. inexperienced in controversy, and that Abeillard had been a trained foldier from his cradle; that the tenets of faith, which were founded on the infallible word of God, ought not, in his opinion, to be submitted to human investigation; that his own writings were sufficient to condemn him; and that it was the duty of bishops, and not his concern, to pronounce on matters of belief<sup>1</sup>.

Fixed in the same sentiments, he addressed the bishops who were assembling at Sens. "I am challenged, as you have heard, says he, to a public disputation: the servant of God should rather bear all patiently, than contend. Were the cause my own, I might place confidence perhaps in your protection: but it is yours; I therefore entreat and admonish you, to shew yourselves the friends of Christ in the day of need.—Be not surprised, that thus suddenly you are called upon: it has been the wily artifice of the enemy, that he might attack you unprepared, and thus more easily force you into terms<sup>m</sup>."

There was a puffanimity and an affectation of moderation in this behaviour of Bernard. He had himself been the aggressor; and if he was not prepared to meet the man he had injured and insulted, it only proves, that he had precipitately engaged in a business, which it would have become him to have weighed more maturely. But he had vainly expected, it seems, that the sound of his name would have over-awed the abbot of St. Gildas, and that he should have been able, without the noise of controversy, to have effected his condemnation.

<sup>1</sup> Bern. Ep. 189.

<sup>m</sup> Ep. 187.

Abeillard was elated by the timid conduct of his adversary: his reluctance he could only ascribe to the conscious apprehension of a defeat; he talked loud, he called on his friends, and he assembled his admirers. To those who were distant from him he communicated, with exultation, the joyful news; nor, in his letters, did he treat with much tenderness the abbot of Clairvaux. If he will dare to meet me, said he, he shall know that I am prepared to answer to his charges.—The reader must observe, that this account is taken from the pen of Bernard<sup>n</sup>. BOOK VI.

“ The boasting of Abeillard, says the saint, was soon public, nor could I be ignorant of it. At first I diffembled, for by popular clamour I was but little moved. My friends were urgent, and I gave way, though with tears, to their advice: they saw the preparations which were making as for a public spectacle, and they feared. lest by my absence the people might be injured, and the enemy triumph. His errors also, they said, would only gain strength, if no one should be present to answer or to oppose them<sup>o</sup>.”—He set out. The discouraging reflection hung upon his mind, that he was unprepared for, and unequal to, the contest: but in the words of the gospel he found consolation; “ Be not thoughtful, how or what to speak, for at that same hour shall be given you what you are to speak.” Thus pensively musing he travelled on, and arrived, when he was little expected, on the appointed day, at Sens.

<sup>n</sup> Ep. 129.

<sup>o</sup> Ibid.

## BOOK VI.

The council  
of Sens.

The assembly opened with great splendour. Lewis the young, king of France, was there, with his nobles; as were William count of Nevers, and Theobald count of Champagne. The clergy were numerous: the archbishop of Sens with his suffragan bishops, and Samson of Reims, with the prelates of his diocese. Many abbots with their monks, professors from the schools, and the learned men of the kingdom, were present.<sup>p</sup>—The first day was spent in the ceremony of translating the relics, for which the meeting had been principally convened; and it was done with uncommon pomp and magnificence. The presence of the king gave a brilliancy to every ceremony.

The gorgeous day was over, and the next rose with unusual expectation. The members of the assembly took their seats; king, lords, prelates, and commons. The two abbots entered, followed by their friends, and walked to their respective places. Every eye was on them. A dead silence prevailed. The abbot of Clairvaux rose from his seat: his attitude spoke diffidence, and his countenance was humble. “I am no accuser of this man,” said he, let his own works speak against him. Here they are, and these are the propositions extracted from them. Let him deny they are his; or condemn them, if they be erroneous; or let him answer to the objections I shall urge against them.”—He then delivered the charges into the hands of the Promoter, to be distinctly read.

<sup>p</sup> Fleury vol. xiv.

He



He began to read, and the council listened with attention: BOOK VI. but he had not advanced far, when he was interrupted by the rising of Abeillard. The step was irregular; out of respect, however, to his character, they shewed a readiness to hear him.—*I appeal to Rome*, said he, and stepped forward to quit the assembly.—A general surprise struck every countenance; they could hardly give credit to their ears: but when the murmur had subsided, Bernard advanced and spoke. “Abeillard, said he, do you fear for your person?” “You have permission to speak freely and in full security: “no sentence shall be pronounced against you.”—The remonstrance was without effect. “I have appealed to the “Roman see,” replied he, and instantly withdrew.

Writers have been much puzzled to account for this extraordinary behaviour of Abeillard. The admirers of Bernard say, that he was so struck by the more than human appearance of the saint, as to lose his recollection and all presence of mind<sup>a</sup>.—It is the opinion of others that, when he considered the dispositions of his judges, men partially attached to his accuser, he deemed it more prudent to refer his cause to a higher court, where he knew he had friends, and should find protection<sup>r</sup>. Of this however he might have been aware, before he challenged Bernard to meet him at Sens, and provoked a public contest.—Others relate that, he was apprehensive of a popular tumult, which might endanger his life, and saw no better means of escaping than by appealing to Rome<sup>f</sup>.—In this last account, I believe, there may be truth. It accords with the timid heart of Abeillard; and besides, from the general complexion of the assembly,

<sup>a</sup> Godef. in vita Bern. l. iii. <sup>r</sup> Bern. Ep. ad Innocen. <sup>f</sup> Otho. de gest. Frid.

BOOK VI. of which he could not competently judge, till his own eyes had witnessed it, there might be serious reason to fear that justice would not be done him. The treatment he had experienced from the council of Soissons, would now rise, in full force, upon his recollection; and when he beheld with what marks of religious veneration the person of Bernard was treated, and his words received, could he expect an impartial hearing? Conscious, however, as he was of his own innocence, had not his heart been timid as the hare's, he might have met, it seems, the ill-founded charges of his antagonist, might have spoken, as he was so able, in his own defence, and have waited, with manliness, the sentence of the council.

The proceedings of the assembly were much disconcerted by the appeal of Abeillard. It was informal, they knew, as he had voluntarily submitted himself to their cognizance; but he had now referred his cause to the supreme court of judicature. After some debate, in which the opinions were much divided, it was finally agreed that, out of respect to Rome, the person of Abeillard should be spared, but that judgment should be pronounced on his opinions. The propositions, which Bernard had presented, were then read and examined: he himself spoke largely and with vehemence on the subject, and he proved, to the conviction of the meeting, from the authorities of the scriptures and of the ancient fathers, that they were not only false, but heretical. As such they were condemned.—The next step was to inform the bishop of Rome of their proceedings, to request the confirmation of their sentence, and to take every possible precaution that Abeillard should not find that support

support in Italy, on which he seemed to rely. This com- BOOK VI.  
mission was intrusted to the abbot of Clairvaux<sup>t</sup>.

He entered with alacrity into the views of the council, and it is clear that they chose an able agent. Nothing can be more artful, more severe, or more abusive, than the letters he wrote, on this occasion, to Rome. He wrote to his Holiness in the name of the archbishop of Sens and his suffragans, and in the name of the archbishop of Reims and the three prelates who accompanied him. In the first he details the transactions of the assembly, and he entreats him to impose silence on Abeillard, to forbid him either to teach or to write in future, and to condemn his works; that by so doing he will draw the thorns out of the field of the church, and that it will again flourish and bear fruit.—The second is less prolix, and more violent. He treats Abeillard as a monster swelling with pride, who marches with an erect countenance, as if nothing were hidden from him, who pretends to penetrate the mysteries of faith, while all he builds up, is a pile of errors. “The boasting of the man, he  
“says, is the more vain-glorious, because his book has  
“found readers in the Roman court. This has confirmed,  
“and given energy to his rage.—We have proceeded in  
“the business as far as it was expedient: it remains with  
“you, most holy Father, to take care that, in your day,  
“the beauty of the church be defiled by no stain of heretical  
“depravity.”

In his own name he then addresses the pontiff in two different letters. In the first he specifies the principal errors ascribed to Abeillard, and he refutes them. There is some  
addresses

<sup>t</sup> Fleury vol. xiv.

BOOK VI. address and logical acuteness in this attempt, with a large portion of declamation and of malevolent reflections.—The second is more reprehensible. He wishes his own speedy dissolution, on account of the evils which, on all sides, threaten. He had hoped, after the suppression of the late schism, caused by Peter de Leon, to have reposed from his labours; but that now as dangerous a storm was gathered round him. A new gospel, he says, has been forged for the christian people, and a new faith proposed to their belief: Abeillard of France has beckoned to the Italian, Arnold of Brescia, and they have come forward, in strict confederacy, to assail, with all their might, the religion of Christ. In their dress and diet they support the affectation of piety, and to deceive more easily, transform themselves into angels of light. He concludes: “ You who have succeeded to the  
 “ chair of Peter must now consider, whether he who attacks  
 “ the faith of that apostle, should find refuge in his see.  
 “ Weigh your situation. Why were you raised over states  
 “ and kingdoms, unless to root out, to destroy, to build  
 “ up, and to plant? Schism you have extinguished: with  
 “ the same arm, now crush these rising heresies, and your  
 “ crown will be completed.”

It seems more probable that the other letters, which I mentioned as written to the Roman prelates before the council of Sens, should rather be referred to this period. The reader may recur to the extracts I gave, and to the reflections which accompanied them.

Thus did Bernard, true to his own character and to the views of the assembly, aim to vilify and render odious to the

the Roman court the name and principles of the man, who had appealed to its equity, and who was soon in person to appear before it. So intolerant, and so imposing even on the best minds, is religious zeal, when once it has passed those limits, which reason, humanity, and the gospel have opposed to its baneful spread!

The pope, roused by these strong expostulations, waited not for the arrival of Abeillard, but pronounced a definitive sentence on his works and person. Having remarked that, it is never allowed to bring those matters again into discussion, which have once been decided in councils, he adds: "With the advice of the bishops and cardinals of our court, we have condemned the articles, which were sent to us, and all the false opinions of Peter Abeillard, together with their author; and as a heretic we have imposed perpetual silence on him. We think also that all his followers and the abettors of his errors, should be cut off from the communion of the faithful."—This was accompanied by another sentence, addressed to the two archbishops: "We command you to confine, separately, in such monasteries, as you may deem best, Peter Abeillard and Arnold of Brescia, contrivers of erroneous doctrine, and impugnors of the catholic faith, and to burn their works, wherever they may be found."

The sentence  
against  
Abeillard.

How arbitrary are such proceedings! To condemn opinions, which the council of Sens had previously condemned, and which came before him in a form so obnoxious, might have been allowed to the Roman pontiff; but to censure the person of a man, who would soon be at his bar, and to condemn

\* Fleury vol. xiv. p. 556.

BOOK VI. condemn writings which he had never seen, was surely an unwarrantable stretch of ecclesiastical despotism.

Minutely to state the errors, of which the abbot of St. Gildas was accused, would be a useless and uninteresting labour. They were reduced to fourteen:—That there are degrees in the Trinity; that the Holy Ghost is not consubstantial with the Father and the Son; that the devil had never any power over man, and that Jesus Christ became man not to redeem, but to instruct us by his words and example, and that he suffered and died to manifest his love for man; that the Holy Ghost is the soul of the world; that Jesus Christ, *God and man*, is not properly God; that we can will and do good by our own free will, without the help of grace; that in the sacrament of the Lord's supper the accidents of bread remain in the air; that the punishment, not the guilt, of original sin, is derived from Adam; that there is no sin, unless the sinner give his consent, and condemn God; that concupiscence, delight, and ignorance are the cause of no sin; that the suggestions of the devil are raised in man physically, by the contact of stones, plants, and other things, of which he knows the efficacy; that faith is the opinion or judgment we form of things invisible; that God can only do what he has done, and will do; that Jesus did not descend into hell<sup>w</sup>.

Such were these famous errors. Some of them might be contained in the expressions of Abeillard, and these he wished to explain; but the greatest part were the evident misconceptions of his adversaries. In his works might often be found uncommon language, and some extraordinary

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Berengarius, a scholar of Abeillard, a young man of some wit and learning, but petulant, abusive, and vain, wrote in defence of his master. His invective against Bernard is frothy and contemptible; and the fathers of the council of Sens he describes, as over-powered by wine and sleep, while they pronounced sentence on the supposed errors of Abeillard\*.

The abbot of St. Gildas having precipitately retired from the council, did not immediately quit the neighbourhood of Sens. He waited for the result of their deliberations, which was soon notified to him: and now he saw the necessity of instantly beginning his journey. The inveterate spirit of his enemies, which had prompted them to act so harshly, would not desist, he might well know, in the first stage of their prosecution: their complaints and accusations might reach Rome before him.—Not much preparation was necessary: but old as he now was, having entered on his sixty-first year, and infirm, and afflicted, it was an arduous and irksome undertaking. On France, where he had suffered much, he could turn his back without reluctance, and he flattered himself that Italy might be more propitious to his name. Friends, at least, he knew, he had in the Roman court; and there might be some consolation in the thought,

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Revolving in his mind the various events of an unhappy life, and dubious what might be the issue of his present enterprise, he journeyed slowly on. After some days, though he had made but little of his way, he felt his strength exhausted, and soon he was sensible that he must look for some hospitable roof, under which to repose his weary limbs. But could such a roof be found where the name of his adversary was so highly venerated? He recollected that Cluni, a celebrated monastery on the confines of Burgundy, was not very distant, and that Peter Maurice, to whom the appellation of *venerable* had been given, was abbot. He knew him not personally, but to his character he was no stranger. Peter was an honest man, his benevolence was proverbial, and he had a heart which could feel for the distresses of his brother. To ask for refreshment and a few days rest from such a man, could hardly give pain to a disposition the most falsely delicate. Abeillard redoubled his steps, and, without hesitation, entered the convent of Cluni.

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Abeillard acquiesced: the benevolent and persuasive manner of Peter was irresistible; and besides, how pleasing to his troubled mind would be the attention of the monks of Cluni, the friendship of their abbot, and the view of that content, harmony, and religious discipline which every where prevailed! The sight of those magnificent buildings, and of its august temple, would, moreover, diffuse a solemn stillness in his breast.—Cluni, at this time, after Mount Cassino in Italy, might be regarded as the most splendid monastery in the christian world. Its revenues were vast, and its edifices had the appearance of a well-built city. Three crowned heads, with their respective courts, once lodged within the precincts, without moving a single monk from his apartments. A long succession of abbots, for more than two hundred years, eminent for their virtue and their learning, had given celebrity to its name. Of these Peter Maurice was the last, but he was not the least in merit, or in the estimation of an admiring public. The monks, whose number often exceeded two hundred, were not less worthy, less religious, or less learned, than had been their superiors<sup>a</sup>. —All these were circumstances of peculiar notice, and no mind could contemplate them with indifference.

Is entertained at Cluni, and consents to remain there.

In this charming situation, and in this society, Abeillard began to feel his mind grow lighter. He conversed with the monks, and he admired them: they were delighted by his exemplary deportment, his unaffected piety, his engaging manners, and his profound erudition. With the abbot he spent many hours: they discoursed on literary subjects, on the state of religion, and on the general complection of the times.

<sup>a</sup> Fleury t. xiv.

times. Abeillard related many events of his life; but they were all sad and sorrowful. To these Peter could oppose the brilliant series of his own years, which had been serene and prosperous. He did it without exultation, to cheer the drooping spirits of his friend, and to attest his gratitude to heaven. He was born, he said, in Auvergne, and descended from the ancient family of Maurice or Montboissier; that when very young, agreeably to the wishes of his parents, who had devoted him to God, he had entered into the house of Cluni; that soon after he was promoted to the priory of Vezelay; and that, before he had reached his thirtieth year, he had been made abbot and general of his order. Far above his merit, he said, were these honours; but Rome had overlooked his imperfections, and his brethren had been indulgent to his weaknesses.

He related to him the extraordinary life and character of Pontius, his predecessor, from whom he had experienced a very singular opposition. He had been chosen the seventh abbot of Cluni, with very general approbation, and for some years had governed his order with a becoming moderation and wisdom. But he was a man of violent passions, vain, arrogant, presumptuous, and power did but serve to give them a greater energy. By degrees, the good-will of his monks was alienated from him: they charged him with many misdemeanors; that in his conduct there was an indecent levity, that he disregarded the advice of wise counsellors, and that he dissipated, in vain parade and feasting, the income of his monastery. These complaints were carried to the ears of the pontiff Callixtus. Pontius was irritated; but he turned his rage against himself: he went to Rome, and petitioned

BOOK VI. petitioned to be released from his office. The pope consented. Thus free to chuse a new profession, he put on the pilgrim's habit, and travelled to Jerusalem, firmly resolved, as he told his friends, there to end his days. He had been thirteen years abbot of Cluni.

Hardly had I been three years in office, continued Peter, when my predeceffor, disgusted with Palestine, returned, through Italy, into France. His partisans received him cordially, and they spoke, in the highest strain, of the sanctity of his life: he wore iron hoops round his arms, they said; ate nothing, prayed incessantly, and that the foulest disorders vanished at his touch. I was then absent from Cluni, on some business of my order, in Aquitaine. Pontius for some time dissembled; he seemed unwilling to go to Cluni, but insensibly he approached it; and collecting round him some renegade monks and a few armed men, on a sudden he appeared before the gates. Bernard the prior and his monks were soon dispersed, and Pontius entered the convent at the head of his followers.

Of the few, whom he found within the walls, some he compelled by threats or torments, to swear obedience to him, and the refractory he expelled or threw into prison. The crosses, chalices, and every thing that was valuable, he melted down to pay his soldiers, and to enrich his dependants. Nor would this satisfy him: he marched out at the head of armed parties against the castles and strong places belonging to the monastery, and the whole country he laid waste by fire and sword. For more than half a year did these devastations last; while Bernard and his faithful associates  
made

made the best defence they could, and intrepidly withstood the attacks and stratagems of the enemy. BOOK VI.

I remained in Aquitaine. My presence, I thought, would only have increased the flame, and I was, indeed, little disposed, as I was little qualified, to make head against the martial and enterprising Pontius.—Soon after, a terrible anathema was pronounced against him by Rome; nevertheless, both parties were cited before that tribunal. I obeyed, and my antagonist soon followed. The day was fixed for our appearance; but as Pontius was an excommunicated man, he could not, agreeably to the canons, be admitted to the bar: notice was therefore sent to him, that he should prepare himself for absolution, by a due course of penance. He answered the messenger; that the power of excommunication belonged only to St. Peter, and that no mortal man possessed it.—I need not say, how much this haughty reply enraged the pontiff; the Roman people were struck with horror, and Pontius was proclaimed a schismatic.

The same message was then sent to his partisans. They were more tractable; they acknowledged their crimes; barefooted they entered the palace, and were absolved. Afterwards they were admitted to plead the cause of their master, though the indulgence was remarkable, and seldom had been heard a more groundless plea.—Our defence was then called for: we spoke, and were listened to with attention.—His holiness rose from his throne, and withdrew with his council, to weigh the merits of our cause. After some hours, he returned, resumed his seat, and the bishop of Porto was ordered to read the sentence. It was in these words: “The  
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Abeillard acquiesced: the benevolent and persuasive manner of Peter was irresistible; and besides, how pleasing to his troubled mind would be the attention of the monks of Cluni, the friendship of their abbot, and the view of that content, harmony, and religious discipline which every where prevailed! The sight of those magnificent buildings, and of its august temple, would, moreover, diffuse a solemn stillness in his breast.—Cluni, at this time, after Mount Cassino in Italy, might be regarded as the most splendid monastery in the christian world. Its revenues were vast, and its edifices had the appearance of a well-built city. Three crowned heads, with their respective courts, once lodged within the precincts, without moving a single monk from his apartments. A long succession of abbots, for more than two hundred years, eminent for their virtue and their learning, had given celebrity to its name. Of these Peter Maurice was the last, but he was not the least in merit, or in the estimation of an admiring public. The monks, whose number often exceeded two hundred, were not less worthy, less religious, or less learned, than had been their superiors<sup>a</sup>. —All these were circumstances of peculiar notice, and no mind could contemplate them with indifference.

Is entertained at Cluni, and consents to remain there.

In this charming situation, and in this society, Abeillard began to feel his mind grow lighter. He conversed with the monks, and he admired them: they were delighted by his exemplary deportment, his unaffected piety, his engaging manners, and his profound erudition. With the abbot he spent many hours: they discoursed on literary subjects, on the state of religion, and on the general complection of the times.

<sup>a</sup> Fleury t. xiv.

times. Abeillard related many events of his life; but they were all sad and sorrowful. To these Peter could oppose the brilliant series of his own years, which had been serene and prosperous. He did it without exultation, to cheer the drooping spirits of his friend, and to attest his gratitude to heaven. He was born, he said, in Auvergne, and descended from the ancient family of Maurice or Montboissier; that when very young, agreeably to the wishes of his parents, who had devoted him to God, he had entered into the house of Cluni; that soon after he was promoted to the priory of Vezelay; and that, before he had reached his thirtieth year, he had been made abbot and general of his order. Far above his merit, he said, were these honours; but Rome had overlooked his imperfections, and his brethren had been indulgent to his weaknesses.

He related to him the extraordinary life and character of Pontius, his predecessor, from whom he had experienced a very singular opposition. He had been chosen the seventh abbot of Cluni, with very general approbation, and for some years had governed his order with a becoming moderation and wisdom. But he was a man of violent passions, vain, arrogant, presumptuous, and power did but serve to give them a greater energy. By degrees, the good-will of his monks was alienated from him: they charged him with many misdemeanors; that in his conduct there was an indecent levity, that he disregarded the advice of wise counsellors, and that he dissipated, in vain parade and feasting, the income of his monastery. These complaints were carried to the ears of the pontiff Callixtus. Pontius was irritated; but he turned his rage against himself: he went to Rome, and petitioned

BOOK VI. and the intemperate lives of the monks and clergy, and against them he would direct the severest opposition. His cause, he well knew, would be popular, and the better, under the guise of sanctity, to effect his purpose, he threw over his shoulders, the austere dress of a religious man.

Thus habited Arnold opened his invective in the streets of Brescia. The people crowded round him. He told them he was sent to reform abuses, to pull down the proud, and to exalt the humble. He then pointed his declamation against the bishops, against the clergy, against the monks, and finally against the Roman pontiff himself: to the laity only he was indulgent, and them even he flattered in their crimes. Churchmen, said he, who hold benefices, bishops who have domains, and monks that have possessions, will all be damned.—His hearers shouted approbation.—These things, continued he, belong to the prince, he may give them to whom he pleases, but he must give them to the laity. It is on their tithes and the voluntary contributions of the people that those sons of God must live: they must be frugal, continent, and mortified.

Thus does Guntherus of Liguria, a very elegant poet of the age, speak of Arnold and his preaching:

Tandem natalibus oris  
 Redditus, assumpta sapientis fronte, disertus  
 Fallebat sermone rudes; clerumque procaci  
 Infectans odio, monachorum acerrimus hostis,  
 Plebis adulator, gaudens popularibus auris,  
 Pontifices, ipsumque gravi corrodere lingua  
 Audebat papam; scelerataque dogmata vulgo  
 Diffundens, variis implebat vocibus aures.

Lib. 2.

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The church of Brescia was soon thrown into the greatest confusion, and the people, already prejudiced against their ministers, threatened to overturn their altars. The sacred writings he had the address to urge in support of his assertions, and from them he denounced the vengeance of heaven against the violators of the law. Indeed, nothing could be more glaringly offensive, than the ostentatious parade of the bishops and great abbots, and the soft and licentious lives of the monks and clergy; but Arnold, in his declamation, far exceeded the bounds of truth.

Pontificum fastus, abbatum denique laxos  
 Damnabat penitus mores, monachosque superbos.  
 Veraque multa quidem, nisi tempora nostra fideles  
 Respuerent monitus, falsis admixta monebat.  
 Et fateor, pulchram fallendi noverat artem,  
 Veris falsa probans; quia tantum falsa loquendo  
 Fallere nemo potest.

In 1139 was celebrated a grand council at Rome. Arnold was cited to appear before it. His accusers were the bishop of Brescia, and many others, whom he had ridiculed and insulted. Nor from his judges could he look for much indulgence. He was found guilty, and sentenced to perpetual silence. Considering his crime, this surely was a gentle punishment. But Arnold, whose highest ambition lay in the free use of words, viewed it, possibly, in a less partial light: he therefore instantly left Italy, crossed the Alps, and sat down at Zurich, where he dogmatized with new virulence and great success.

Territus,

## BOOK VI.

Territus, et miseræ confusus imagine culpæ,  
 Fugit ab urbe sua, tranſalpinſque receptus,  
 Qua ſibi vicinas Alemannia ſuſpicit alpes,  
 Nobile Turegum, doctoris nomine falſo,  
 Infedit, totamque brevi ſub tempore terram  
 Perfidus impuri ſædavit dogmatis aura.

Though Arnold had quitted Italy, yet had his opinions taken deep root, and Rome itſelf was infected by them. Irritated by the conduct of their maſter, Innocent the ſecond, the Roman people aſſembled in the Capitol. It was propoſed that the power of the pontiff, which they called exorbitant, ſhould be reſtrained: this was carried: when ſuddenly, inſpired as it were by the genius of the place, they moved that the ſenate, which for years had been aboliſhed, ſhould be reſtored. The propoſition was received with the loudeſt acclamations. Innocent in vain oppoſed the bold deſign; there was a magic in it which ſpread irrefiſtibly, and for a moment ſeemed to rouse the fallen ſpirit of the nation. The pope viewed with horror the reverſe of fortune which threatened the tiara; to be ſhorn of his mighty power, and to become the mere ſhepherd of the chriſtian people, was a thought too afflicting: he fell ſick, and died §.

Under his two immediate ſucceſſors, Celeſtin and Lucius, whoſe reigns were but of a few months, the Romans purſued their darling object. They waited on the latter, and, in an imperious tone, demanded the reſtitution of all the honours and civil rights, which had been uſurped from the people. The prince of the ſenate, ſaid they, whom we have choſen,

§ Fleury vol. xiv.

chosen, will best administer the important trust: the tithes and offerings of the faithful will sufficiently answer all the exigencies of your holiness: it was thus that our ancient bishops lived.—Lucius had recourse to Conrad, the king of the Romans; and at the same time, the malcontents sent an embassy to him, offering him their empire, and requesting that he would march to their assistance. To this invitation Conrad gave no attention; he viewed it as an attempt, at once wild and licentious: but to the pope's deputies he shewed every mark of esteem. Lucius survived this event but a few days.

Eugenius the third was his successor, the friend and disciple of the renowned Bernard. The night before his consecration the senators assembled, and it was agreed, that either he should solemnly confirm all their proceedings, or they would annul his election. This resolution was notified to him. He called together his friends; and it was their advice, that he should neither accede to the extravagant demand, nor expose himself, by a refusal, to the fury of the populace. He therefore silently withdrew from Rome, and retired to a neighbouring fortress. Here the ceremony of his consecration was performed.

Arnold who, in banishment, had contemplated the effect of his admonitions on the minds of the Romans, and the success which seemed to follow their exertions, was now informed that the pope had retired, and that the gates of the capital were open to receive him: it was likewise suggested to him, that his presence was more than ever necessary, to give energy to their resolves, form to their plans, and stability to their undertakings. Arnold took fire at the news; an unusual swell of enthusiasm filled his breast;

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and

BOOK VI. and he fancied that, like Junius Brutus, he was called on once more to give liberty to Rome.—At his appearance a new stream of vigour animated the citizens; they called him their friend and their deliverer. The Brescian walked amongst them; his deportment was humble, his countenance emaciated, his address affable, and he spoke to them of moderation, of submission, of obedience.—With the nobles and new senators he held another language; though to them also he was mild and diffident, speaking much of virtue and of respect for religion and the laws<sup>b</sup>.

But no sooner was he sensible of his own real influence, and saw the lengths to which the revolted had already carried their designs, than he threw aside the mask, and appeared in his own character, daring, impetuous, self-sufficient, vain. He harangued the people; he talked of their forefathers, the ancient Romans, who, by the wisdom of their senate, and the valour of their armies, had conquered nations, and subdued the earth. He dwelt on the names and the achievements of the Bruti, the Gracchi, and the Scipios; and of these men, said he, are you not the children? He advised, that the Capitol be instantly repaired, that the equestrian order be restored, that the people have their tribunes, that dignity attend the senate, and that the laws, which had been silent and neglected, be revived in all their vigour. He spoke of the pope, as of a deposed and banished tyrant: “ But should you again be disposed, continued he, “ to admit him within these walls; first fix your own rights, “ and determine his. He is but your bishop; let him therefore have his spiritual jurisdiction. The government of “ Rome,

<sup>b</sup> Bern. Ep. 195, 196.



“ Rome, its civil establishments, and its territories, belong  
“ to you. These you will keep, if you have the spirit of  
“ men, and the hearts of Romans<sup>i</sup>.”

Quin etiam titulos urbis renovare vetustos,  
Patricios recreare viros, priscoque quirites,  
Nomine plebeio fecernere nomen equestre,  
Jura tribunorum, sanctum reparare senatum,  
Et senio fessas, mutasque reponere leges;  
Lapsa ruinosis et adhuc pendentia muris  
Reddere primævo Capitolia prisca nitori;  
Suadebat populo.

Lib. iii.

Fired by this harangue, the people, headed by the most disaffected of the nobles, publicly attacked the few cardinals and churchmen, who remained in the city; they set fire to the palaces; and they compelled the citizens to swear obedience to the new government. Moderate men, who saw the folly of the attempt, were shocked at these excesses of popular phrenzy; but it was vain to oppose the torrent: they submitted, looking forward, with some curiosity, to the termination of an event, which had begun in extravagance, and must end in disappointment.

Eugenius till now had viewed, with some concern, the wild derangement of his people; but when it seemed, that their eyes opened to their own excesses, he could be inactive no longer. He excommunicated the ringleaders of the faction, and at the head of his troops, who were chiefly composed of Tiburtini, a people always hostile to the

<sup>i</sup> Ott. Frising. lib. ii.

BOOK VI. Romans, he marched against the enemy. His friends, within the walls, who were numerous, co-operated with his designs; and in a few days, overtures for peace were made to the pontiff. He acceded to them, but on condition, that they should annul the arrangements they had made, and if they would have senators, that they should acknowledge all their power was from him. The people were satisfied, and they threw open the gates, through which Eugenius entered, among the acclamations of a fawning and inconstant multitude.—Before this event Arnold had retired; but he left behind him many friends strongly attached to his person and principles.

We hear little more of this enthusiast, for such he was, till the reign of Adrian, our countryman, when, on account of fresh tumults, he and his adherents were excommunicated, and Rome was threatened with an interdict, unless they expelled the whole party from their walls. This they did. The Arnolds retired with their champion into Tuscany, where he was received as a prophet, and honoured as a saint. His enemies, however, prevailed: he was made prisoner, and conducted, under a strong escort, to Rome. In vain was great interest made to save his life; he was condemned and executed, and his ashes thrown into the Tiber, lest the people should collect his remains, and venerate them as the relics of a sainted martyr<sup>k</sup>.

Such was Arnold of Brescia, a man, whose character, whose principles, and whose views, we perhaps should be disposed to admire, had his life been recorded by unprejudiced historians, and not brought down to us drawn in the blackest

<sup>k</sup> Fleury vol. xv.

blackest colours, which party, bigoted zeal, and enthusiasm could lay on. He was rash, mis-judging, and intemperate, or never would he have engaged in so unequal a contest.—The view of such a phenomenon in the twelfth century excites a pleasing admiration. To attack the Roman pontiff and his clergy in the very centre of their power, required a more than common share of fortitude; to adopt a settled scheme of restoring to its pristine glory the republic of Rome, demanded a stretch of thought, comprehensive and enterprising; and to forego the ease and indulgence of a dissipated age, for the reformation of manners and the suppression of what he thought usurped dominion, argued a character of mind, disinterested, generous, and benevolent. But Arnold, like other reformers, went too far; and passion soon vitiated undertakings, which were begun perhaps with motives the most laudable.—The readiness, with which the Roman people embraced his plan of lowering the jurisdiction of the pontiff, and restraining it within those bounds, which the true spirit of christianity had fixed, at once shews, that they could reason justly, and that they considered the unbounded sway of the triple crown, to which reluctantly they submitted, as an assumed prerogative, to which violence or misconstruction, and not christian right, had given efficacy.

Tanchelm or Tanchelin was another of those extraordinary apostles, who, about this period, attracted very general notice. He also was a man, as his historians represent him, who, under the imposing air of austerity and mortification, of abstemiousness from pleasure and an animated zeal against the vices of churchmen, gained a wondrous ascendancy.

Tanchelm of Antwerp.

BOOK VI. ascendancy over the minds of the people. He opened his mission therefore by preaching against the disorders of the age. He was artful and insinuating, and though a laic, possessed knowledge, and a flow of eloquence which was rapid and imposing.—Antwerp was then a great and flourishing city; but its vices were exuberant, and the torrent had spread itself into the adjacent countries. Here Tanchelm preached. He inveighed against the excesses of the great and opulent. The people listened with wonder. He courted their attention, and flattered their humour. He could then proceed to greater lengths: they were ignorant, he found, and uninstructed, and were therefore disposed to take whatever doctrines, he should lay before them. He talked of the pope, of bishops, and of the clergy, as of men, who had intruded themselves into the ministry of religion; to enjoy their ease, and to cajole the people: the sacraments he represented as profane and useless ceremonies; and the supper of our Lord as of no avail to salvation: and in himself and in his followers, he concluded, dwelt the whole spirit of the church.

It was now time to make a more splendid figure: hitherto, his appearance had been lowly, and his discourse modest. He decorated his cloths with gold, and his hair with jewels, and surrounded by a guard of three thousand men, he advanced among their acclamations, preceded by a standard and a naked sword. Thus escorted he preached in the open fields, and his words were received as oracles from heaven: nor could they be withstood; carnage and devastation marked his progress wherever opposition was made to his designs.—I speak not of the abominations, he is said, to have

have committed, nor of the atrocious disorders which his principles, are also said, to have recommended and sanctified. The enemies of orthodoxy have often been charged with crimes, which to have committed coolly and systematically, seems not to have come within the sphere of human depravity. It is more probable, because more possible, that their adversaries, though good and well-intentioned men, defamed their conduct. and mis-judged their principles. In the clash of two opinions the most probable must be chosen.

Emboldened by success, Tanchelm raised his views to higher honours. He dared to tell the people that he was God. "Jesus Christ," said he, took divinity to himself, "because the plenitude of the Holy Spirit came upon him; I have received the same spirit, therefore am I equal to him." The people believed him, and fell prostrate at his feet.—To enhance the glory of his divinity, he entertained magnificently the crowds, which followed him; and joy, merriment, and pleasure gave a zest to religion, which it had not known before. They who could approach his person, felt a glow of inspiration in their breasts; the ground on which he had trodden was deemed holy; and the water, in which he had bathed, they preserved as a relic of inestimable value: it supported health, and expelled the most inveterate disorders.

To defray his expences, which were great, Tanchelm had recourse to every device; but the liberality of his friends began to slacken. His invention, however, was not exhausted. He ordered a large statue of the Virgin Mary to be brought out among the people: Tanchelm then advanced

BOOK VI. advanced up to it; he touched her hand, and pronounced the words which are used at the marriage ceremony. "You see, said he, what I have done; I have married this virgin: it is now your duty to make the customary presents."—Two boxes were then placed, one for the men, the other for the women, on each side of the image.—"Now shall we discover, continued he, which of you entertain the sincerest regard for me and my wife."—It was a contest of love and benevolence; but the women seemed to carry it: they tore the ornaments from their heads, the collars from their necks, and the rings from their ears.

When the impostor, by such uncommon arts, had spread his influence and opinions over many provinces of Flanders, he meditated greater conquests. It is said, that he thought of going to Rome itself, there to oppose his *divinity* against the mighty power of the pontiff. But as, one day, he was entering into a boat, which was to carry him on some religious expedition, a good priest aimed a blow at his head, which put a final period to all his greatness. His opinions, however, survived him, and his disciples, in spite of opposition, multiplied and maintained their tenets. Against them, Norbert of Premontré, of whom already I have spoken, was sent, and he successfully performed his commission, by preaching, by miracles, and by a display of the most exalted virtues<sup>1</sup>.

To account for the extreme animosity with which these, and other sectaries of the age, were actuated against the ministers of the church, certain circumstances must be duly considered. It is not without a cause that violent passions are

<sup>1</sup> Fleury vol. xiv. Nat. Alex.

are excited.—France, about a century before, had been inundated by various sects, which went under the common denomination of Manicheans. They were treated with unexampled severity, and many had been burned in the different provinces of the kingdom. Persecution made them more circumspect, but it also inflamed their hatred against the clergy, who had been the principal agents in their oppression, and whose zeal had unsheathed the magistrate's sword against them. From the ashes of the dead, as it ever happens, rose a vindictive race, on whose minds grew the early impression, that they must revenge their own, and their fathers cause. It was hence their leading object to insult and vilify the priesthood, and whatever was of a nature to give them respect and consideration, in the eyes of the people, that they attacked with peculiar virulence: such was the administration of the sacraments and their efficacy, the ceremonies of the church, prayers for the living and the dead, the order of priesthood, the Lord's supper, and the authority of the first pastors of the church.

The disorders and ignorance of the clergy were, besides, extreme: this has been already observed: the offices in the church were venal; the sacraments were administered by men, whom simony had corrupted, and concubinage debased; and the momentous truths of religion and morality were sunk in idle ceremony and vile superstition.—This is the dark side of the object.—Governed by such rulers, the people were ignorant, were brutal, were head-strong; nor could they have respect for those, to support whose excesses they contributed much of their substance, and from

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whom,

BOOK VI.

BOOK VI. whom, in return, they received imperious words and unfeeling treatment. They would be ready to rebel, and to pull down these proud and useless ministers. A head only was wanting; and he who had courage, had some learning, was eloquent, and had address to manage the wayward passions of the multitude, might lead them to the wildest measures, and become their friend, their master, their general, and their prophet<sup>m</sup>. Such were Arnold of Brescia and Tanchelm, and such was Henry de Bruys, in nothing inferior to either.

Henry de  
Bruys.

Henry was in France, what his contemporaries, whom I have described, were in Italy and in Flanders; he was the disciple of Peter de Bruys, who had shewn him the way, and had taught him the maxims, which he himself had practised, and sealed with his blood. The errors of Peter were, that infant baptism was useless, because it was necessary they should make an act of faith, and receive instructions—that churches, altars, and all material buildings, disgraced the service of God, and should be destroyed—that the cross was an implement of superstition, and should be broken and trodden under foot—that the sacrifice of the mass was an idle ceremony, and ought not to be celebrated—and that alms, prayers, or other good works, offered for the dead, availed them nothing.

Peter was violent and head-strong, and these doctrines, which he might have propagated by gentle means, he would force on his countrymen by outrages and bloodshed. The southern provinces of France were the theatre of his excesses. He re-baptised the people, pillaged the churches,

<sup>m</sup> Dict. des Heresies p. 484.



churches, overturned the altars, burned the crosses, tortured the ministers, and forced the monks by threats and blows, to take wives, or to perish in dungeons.—So relates Peter the venerable, the man of benevolence and moderation, from what his own eyes had witnessed; and he it was, who principally opposed himself to the progress of the proud reformer<sup>n</sup>.—Peter was at last seized by the irritated people, before whom, on Good Friday, he had lighted up a large bonfire of crosses, and having broiled some meat before it, invited the spectators to partake of his meal: they threw him into the flames, and he was consumed.

His friend Henry was warned by the example. He had adopted all the opinions of his master, and had added to them of his own: of these the principal were, that spiritual songs are an insult to the Deity, that he only delights in pious affections, that he is not invoked by loud vociferation, nor soothed by the harmony of music<sup>o</sup>.—The idea was gloomy; it had little else in it that was censurable.—The violence with which Peter had enforced his doctrine, seemed not to agree with the dispositions of Henry; he therefore adopted another method, which was that of insinuation and persuasive eloquence.

The description given of his person and way of life, by a contemporary writer, when he was young, and first appeared in the diocese of Mans, is not incurious. “About this time, says he, came from the neighbouring pro-

<sup>n</sup> Pet. Cluniac. Ep.

<sup>o</sup> Ibid.

BOOK VI. “vinces a certain hypocrite, whose actions, morals, opinions, rendered deserving of the severest punishments. He was young, but he wore his hair short, and his beard unshorn; he was tall in stature, moved quick, and his feet, in the rigour of winter, were naked; his countenance and eyes were agitated as the raging sea; he spoke rapidly, and his voice was loud as the howling billows. In his dress he was negligent and filthy, nor did he live like other men: he frequented, for his meals, the houses of the meanest citizens; chose for his abode, during the day, the porches of his friends’ habitations, and slept in the most exposed and inclement places. But he soon acquired the reputation of a faint: the ladies, in particular, extolled his virtues; they said, he had the spirit of a prophet, that he could read the interior of their minds, and tell their secret sins<sup>p</sup>.” And well he might, if it be true, what the same author relates of his familiar conversation with them.

In this diocese, so great was the fame of his virtues, Henry obtained permission to preach to the people. They flocked to him, and the clergy even exhorted them to it. He mounted the tribunal, which had been prepared for him; his voice sounded like the thunder from heaven; and they drank down his words with rapture. Soon was the multitude convinced that he was a man divinely sent; and when Henry perceived the impression, he seized the moment, and laid before them his

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<sup>p</sup> Chronic. Cenoman. in Nat. Alex.

own favourite opinions. But his main drift was to instill into their minds an aversion for their ministers, and to rouse them to acts of violence and fury. The event more than answered his most sanguine wishes, and the clergy were soon sensible how miserably they had been deluded.

The people came from his discourses, disturbed in their belief, and drunk with enthusiasm. They attacked their priests, and insulted the clergy, refusing to sell even the common necessaries to their domestics: they threatened to destroy their houses, to pillage their goods; and from menaces would have proceeded to every act of violence, had not the count of Mans, and the principal nobility, opposed the outrageous current of their phrenzy.

In the mean time, Hildebert, the bishop, who had been absent, returned from Rome. He was astonished at the change in his flock; for, instead of the respect, which ever before he had experienced from them, they insultingly refused his blessing, shouted the name of Henry in his ears, threw dirt at the clergy who accompanied him, and abused them in the most petulant and opprobrious language. But Hildebert was a cool and experienced man, and by gentle means so far opened the eyes of his people, that Henry thought proper to withdraw, and to look for new friends, in the provinces of Languedoc and Provence, where Peter had made so rich a harvest.

Eugenius

BOOK VI. Eugenius of Rome, of whom I have spoken, was not slow in sending a proper force against him. Bernard entered the lists, but the crafty impostor declined the contest. He retired; search was made, and he was taken. We hear no more of him, only that he was delivered to the bishop of Toulouse, who threw him into prison, where probably he died<sup>a</sup>.

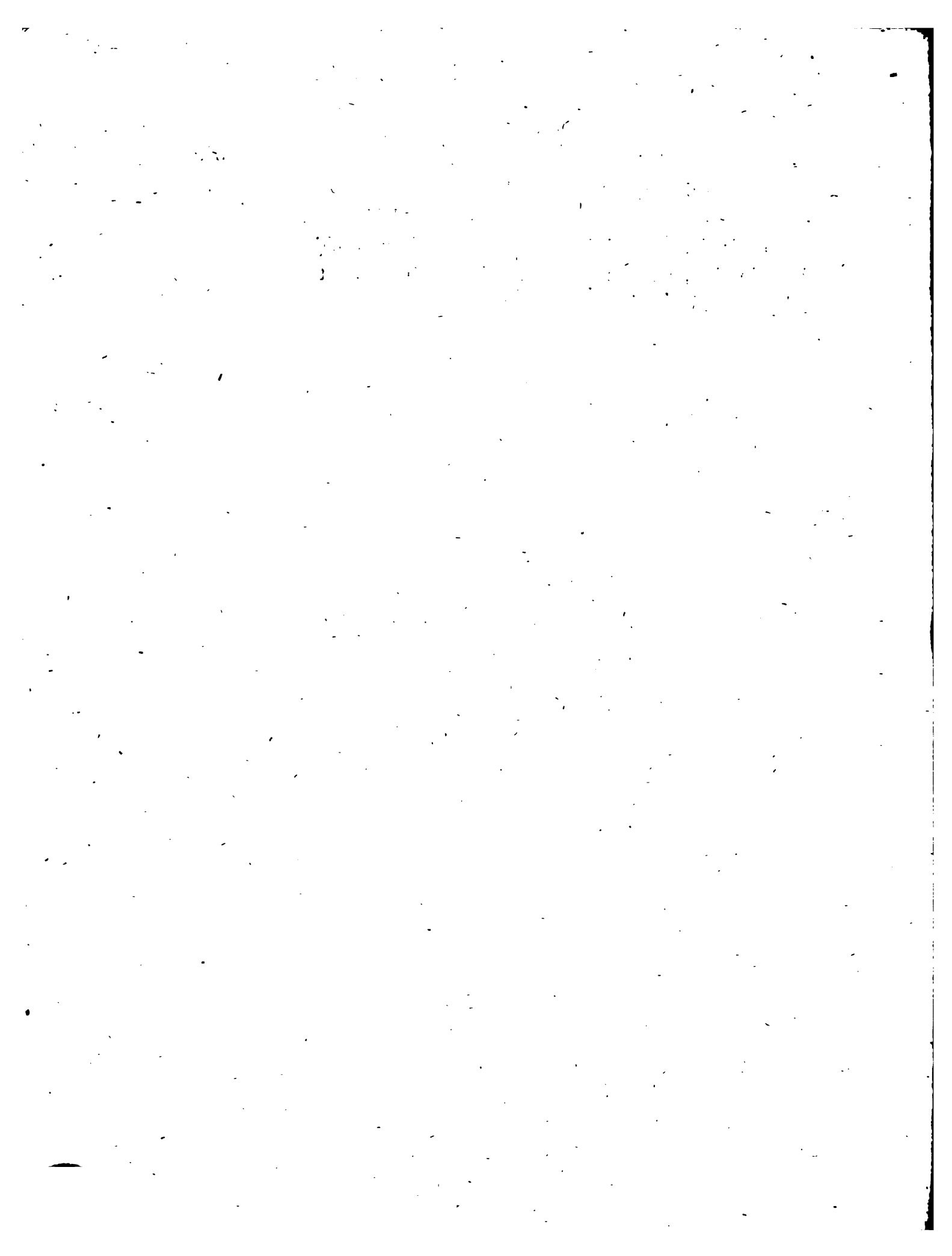
It is in such men as these, and in their opinions, that protestant writers have looked for that chain of tradition, by which the doctrine they profess, may have been brought down to them<sup>r</sup>. It may be so; but providence, it seems, must have chosen extraordinary vehicles for the conveyance of his most important documents to man. I am, however, very ready to believe, as I have before noticed, that much of the accounts, which are recorded of them, is extremely fallacious and over-charged. But where may we look for other sources of information, out of which to form a more prudent judgment, and whereby the writings of their contemporaries, a Bernard and a Peter the venerable, may be corrected and reformed? To the reader also the reflection must ever recur, that, as the opinions which these men supported, were uniformly and steadily opposed, as soon as they were made public, there must have been *novelty*, at least, in them, and consequently that they were not parts of that ancient and authentic doctrine, on which time and authority had stamped their venerable seal.

<sup>a</sup> Fleury vol. xiv.

<sup>r</sup> Bafnage hist. des Egl. Ref.

Other men there were, about this period, whose characters were almost as deserving of notice, as these I have mentioned; but enough has been said to answer the object I have in view, and Abeillard, of whom I must soon take my last farewell, again calls me to Cluni. BOOK VI.

END OF THE SIXTH BOOK.



THE  
H I S T O R Y  
OF THE LIVES OF  
ABEILLARD and HELOISA.

B O O K VII.

*Abeillard writes two apologies—His life at Cluni—He falls sick—  
And dies at St. Marcellus—His character—The abbot of Cluni  
writes an account of his death to Heloisa—She requests his body,  
and obtains it—Writes to Peter the venerable—His answer—  
Innocent II.—Eugenius III.—Adrian IV.—State of England  
—State of France—The second crusade—Death and character  
of Suger—of Bernard—of Peter the venerable—Heloisa—Her  
death.*

Anno, 1141.

I F the reader be not a whimsical man, and therefore BOOK VII.  
fond of exotic characters, he will leave, without re-  
gret, the new company, to which I had introduced him,  
and rejoice once more to meet Abeillard and his venerable  
friend.

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Having

## BOOK VII.

He writes two  
apologies.

Having consented to remain at Cluni, could permission be obtained from Rome, Abeillard, resigned to the will of heaven, composed his agitated thoughts, and sought for comfort in the occupations of prayer and study, to which the genius of the place and his own propensions called him. Peter Maurice was much pleased by the calm resignation of his guest, and he let pass no occasion of giving it stability by every means in his power. He suggested various expedients for filling up the irksome moments of suspense, till his messenger should return, and one day proposed to him the propriety of writing an apology, or a profession of his real opinions, which might be given to the world. “Your sentiments, said he, have been mistaken or misrepresented; you know the charges that are against you; state then your belief, in terms, clear, precise, and unequivocal. It will silence your enemies, and give joy to your friends. Besides, do not your own honour, and the love of truth, exact it from you?”—Abeillard saw the propriety of the measure, and thanked his kind adviser. His mind had long been a stranger to the voice of friendship, and it now fell, soothing as the dew from heaven upon a parched soil.

The opening of his apology is submissive, but manly, and shews how little he deserved the harsh treatment, he had experienced. It is addressed to the universal church.—“The observation, says he, is well known, that the most accurate expressions can be easily perverted, and that he who writes much only adds to the number of his judges. But I who have written little, and in comparison of many others, almost nothing, have not escaped censure; though where I am most heavily charged, God knows, I am not  
“conscious



“ conscious of any fault ; nor, were there any, would I de-  
 “ fend it with obstinacy. Inadvertently I may have written  
 “ what should not have been said ; but heaven is my wit-  
 “ ness, and I appeal to it, that I have uttered nothing from  
 “ malice, nothing from pride of heart. In the schools I  
 “ often spoke to thousands, but it was not surreptitiously ;  
 “ what I thought might tend to the elucidation of truth and  
 “ the progress of morality, that I publicly delivered ; and  
 “ what I have written, that I freely laid before the public,  
 “ not to make profelytes to my opinions, but that they might  
 “ judge them. If I have exceeded in discourse, which may  
 “ have happened, ever have I been disposed to amend or to  
 “ retract my expressions : and in this resolution I will abide  
 “ to the end. How then can I be deemed a heretic?—But  
 “ as it is my duty to correct my errors, if any there be ; so  
 “ will it become me to repel such, as have been falsely im-  
 “ puted to me. I know that purposely, we should not rouse  
 “ the tongues of the malevolent against us ; and when by  
 “ their own malice they are in motion, we should bear it  
 “ patiently ; sometimes however we may be allowed to  
 “ silence them, lest, by their evil reports, they corrupt the  
 “ minds of those, who might draw good from our instruc-  
 “ tions.—Be convinced then, my brethren, that I, an un-  
 “ worthy son as I am of the church, do believe all that she  
 “ believes, do reject all that she rejects. The unity of faith  
 “ I have never violated, though in conduct, I know, I am  
 “ the last of her children<sup>a</sup>.”

He then proceeds to an explicit declaration of his faith,  
 on such points as had been censured ; than which nothing

<sup>a</sup> Op. Abeil. p. 330.

BOOK VII. can be more orthodox, whether it be tried by the test of modern belief in the catholic church, or by the more ancient creeds of the primitive ages.—Peter approved much of his apology, and it was soon dispersed among the churches of France.

While the abbot of St. Gildas was engaged in this laudable work, he heard that Heloisa and her nuns at the Paraclet were much alarmed at what had happened. The dangers in which he was involved, distressed them; and besides, a thousand anxious thoughts disturbed their minds. It was natural, when they heard of the condemnation of his opinions at Sens, and read the sentence of the Roman court against him, that they should tremble for themselves. If their master was a heretic; how could they be orthodox, who had taken all their opinions from him, and who venerated him as the oracle of truth? His sermons were read in their church, and his other works were seldom out of their hands.—Abeillard felt for their situation, and wished to relieve it. The apology he had just written would well answer the purpose, but he was disposed to do it by a more personal address. He therefore wrote to Heloisa.

“ It is the study of philosophy, says he to her, which has  
“ prejudiced the world against me. My enemies allow that,  
“ in this science, I am excellent, but that I know little of  
“ the doctrine of Paul. They commend the acuteness of  
“ my talents, and take from me the purity of a christian  
“ believer. They are led away rather by surmise, than by  
“ any experience of my opinions. I have no ambition to  
“ be a philosopher in opposition to Paul, or to postpone  
“ Christ to Aristotle. It is under his name only that I can be  
“ saved.

“ saved. Wherefore, that all fearful solicitude and anxious  
 “ cares may be expelled from your breast, be assured, He-  
 “ loisa, that my conscience rests upon that rock, on which  
 “ Christ built his church.”—He then specifies the articles of  
 his belief, and concludes: “ This is the faith in which I  
 “ stand, and here I fix the anchor of my hope: thus streng-  
 “ thened, I do not fear the howlings of Scilla; I laugh at  
 “ the gulph of Carybdis; and the fatal songs of the Sirens  
 “ charm me not. If the tempest roar, I am not shaken,  
 “ nor do the blowing winds move me. My feet rest upon  
 “ this solid rock<sup>b</sup>.”

The messenger now returned with the agreeable tidings,  
 that the pope was satisfied with the favourable accounts he  
 had received of the dispositions of Abeillard, that he  
 suspended the sentence which had been pronounced against  
 him, and that, conformably to his request, he was permitted  
 to end his days in the monastery of Cluni.

The calm stillness, which, at evening, often succeeds to  
 a tempestuous day, may very aptly represent the present  
 state of the mind of Abeillard. All was hushed within him,  
 the moment Peter, taking him by the hand, signified to him  
 the will of Rome.—Abeillard then begged the good man’s  
 blessing, and while on his knees, humbly requested, as he  
 was now his subject, that he would lay his commands on him;  
 that the only wish he had, was to retire from the world, to  
 make his peace with heaven, and to be heard of no more.  
 Peter raised him from the ground: “ I have no commands,  
 “ said he, to give you: you are free to indulge your own  
 “ pursuits; and as to the rule of Cluni, by which our hours  
 “ and

His life at  
 Cluni.

<sup>b</sup> Op. Abeil. p. 308.

BOOK VII. “ and conduct are regulated, it shall be no farther binding on you, than as it may suit with your inclinations. Be happy only, and resigned to your station.”—Abeillard insisted, that he should be considered as a private religious man, and that no distinction or indulgence should be shewn him.—To this the abbot would by no means consent, and he gave his orders that, after himself, he should occupy the first place in the monastery.

Very few words will now describe the life of Abeillard. The uniformity of the cloistered situation admits of no variety, and the occupations of one day are the occupations of life. Resigned he was: he was humble, retired, taciturn, studious, and devout. The most perfect admired his greater perfection, and the indolent were animated by the view of his splendid virtues. Peter Maurice, who was an eye-witness to his conduct, has delineated, with much complacency, the behaviour of his friend, and this I will give. It is contained in a letter to Heloisa.

“ It was the superintending providence of heaven which  
 “ sent him to Cluni, in the last years of his life. The pre-  
 “ sent was the richest which could have been made us.  
 “ Words will not easily express the high testimony, which  
 “ Cluni bears to his humble and religious deportment within  
 “ these walls. Never did I behold abjection so lowly, or  
 “ abstemiousness so exemplary. By my express desire, he  
 “ held the first place in our numerous community, but in  
 “ his dress he seemed the last of us all. When in our pub-  
 “ lic processions I saw him walking near me, recollected  
 “ and humble, my mind was struck: so great a man, thought  
 “ I, by

\* Pet. Cluniac. Ep. ad Helois. p. 337.

“ I, by self-abasement, is thus voluntarily brought low !  
 “ Contrary to the practice of many, who call themselves  
 “ religious men, Abeillard seemed to take delight in penury;  
 “ and the most simple and unadorned habit pleased him  
 “ most. He looked no further. In his diet, and in all that  
 “ regarded the care of his body, he was equally reserved  
 “ and abstemious. More than what was absolutely necessary  
 “ he never sought for himself, and he condemned it in  
 “ others. His reading was almost incessant; he often prayed;  
 “ and he never interrupted his silence, unless when, urged  
 “ by the intreaties of the monks, he sometimes conversed  
 “ with them, or in public harangues explained to them the  
 “ great maxims of religion. When able, he celebrated the  
 “ sacred mysteries, offering to God the sacrifice of the im-  
 “ mortal lamb; and after his reconciliation to the apostolic  
 “ see, almost daily. In a word his mind, his tongue, his  
 “ hand, were ever employed in the duties of religion, or  
 “ in developing the truths of philosophy, or in the pro-  
 “ found researches of literature<sup>d</sup>.”

This surely is the description of a perfect man, drawn by the hand of one of the most amiable and beneficent characters, recorded in the annals of monastic history. Peter had long been meditating a reform of the many abuses which, during the administration of Pontius, his predecessor, particularly, had crept into his order: he wished to restore it to its ancient splendour. But also, as every thing that is human seems to contain within itself the principles of its own destruction, Cluni, which had now subsisted more than two hundred years, was in its natural decline; and this was accelerated

<sup>d</sup> Pet. Cluniac. Ep. ad Helois. p. 337.

BOOK VII. accelerated by its vast wealth and unbounded reputation. Its growth had been rapid and unusual, and it fell in a similar proportion. The great man in vain opposed this necessary effect, and with joy he availed himself of the example, the learning, and the influence of Abeillard. They could apply temporary relief to the evil; and Peter, a few years after, introduced a very serious system of reform. He died, and with him expired the glory of Cluni.

In the exercise of the virtues, I have recorded, Abeillard had spent some months, and perhaps they were the happiest of his life. The monks were very desirous that he would be more liberal of his instructions to them, and the abbot (who saw with pleasure that a taste for literature was reviving in his convent, which he could but ascribe to the example of Abeillard), was very pressing that he should comply with their wishes. Abeillard could refuse nothing to his kind benefactor; but he felt a secret reluctance, which no effort could surmount, in again entering on the business of instruction, which had often proved so disastrous to his happiness. The calm, which he now enjoyed, might only portend another storm. There was likewise another cause which aided to generate this distaste for public employment, of which at first he was hardly sensible. His constitution had always been delicate, and care, preying upon his tender fibres, had increased the evil. When he came to Cluni, as Peter observed in his letter to Rome, his health was very precarious, and it did not seem that he had many more years to number. The agitation subsiding, which had given motion to his heart, a languor ensued, and he began to suspect that a period would soon be put to all his labours. With composure he viewed the  
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the event, but it gave a disrelish for every active pursuit, by which his neighbour indeed might have been served, and his own mind would have been disturbed in that awful meditation, which prepares us best for another world. BOOK VII.

He was willing, however, to get the better of his reluctance; to make some return for all the kindness he experienced; and to comply with the intreaties of his friends, which he could oppose no longer. He sometimes, therefore, appeared in the public school of the convent, and entered on such discussions as he thought would be most agreeable to his hearers. Their applause was as unbounded, as it was sincere, and, for a moment, it revived in him that animation of ideas and of eloquence, which was his peculiar excellence. These exertions did but injure his health; his colour was seen to come and go, and a tremulous faltering in his voice soon indicated that the internal frame was giving way. Other symptoms likewise showed themselves, and a scorbutic humour, to which he had long been subject, broke out with violence on many parts of his body.—The monks were alarmed; but no one so much as the good abbot, who now loved him as a friend, and who feared that Cluni would soon be deprived of so eminent a pattern of monastic virtues. He falls sick.

He redoubled his attention to him; he expostulated gently with him on the too little care he seemed to take of his health; he insisted that he should desist from every strong exertion; that he should give less time to study and reflection; that he should conform to none of the duties of the convent; but that by gentle exercise, repose, and every

\* Pet. Cluniac. Ep.

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assistance

BOOK VII. assistance which medicine could supply, he would endeavour to regain strength, and ward off the blow which threatened him. Abeillard submitted; but all attempts to relieve him proved successless; his malady grew daily more inveterate, and it was judged proper to try the effect of another air.

And dies at  
St. Marcellus.

At Chalons on the river Saone, not far from Cluni, stood the priory of St. Marcellus. It was beautifully situated at a little distance from the town; the neighbouring country was delightful; and its air was thought to be the most pure in Burgundy. It is the description which Peter himself gives of it. The priory depended on the abbey of Cluni. When it seemed adviseable that Abeillard should try the effect of air, none was judged so proper as that of St. Marcellus; and Peter, with his usual kindness, proposed it to him. Abeillard was not disposed to move; sickness, conspiring with the recollection of former troubles, had served still more to inspire a distaste of life, and he did not wish to leave Cluni, which probably he should never see again, and where, amongst the sympathising cares of his friends, he might close his eyes in peace. This unwillingness he expressed to the abbot, and he dwelt upon it with unusual earnestness. Peter, however, could not recede from the point; for he judged that a life, which every day's experience rendered of more consequence to his convent, should be guarded by every possible attention. He, therefore, persisted in his design, and Abeillard, reluctantly obedient, taking leave of his friends, was conveyed to St. Marcellus. Often did he turn his eyes towards that noble mansion, where he had found protection in distress, and where, to his experience at least, religion, learning, virtue, and Peter the venerable dwelt.

“ Thus.



“ Thus (continues the abbot of Cluni in his narration to  
 “ Heloïsa) this good and simple man, having spent some  
 “ time with us, avoiding evil and fearing God, was, by my  
 “ express desire, sent to Chalons. The scurvy, and other  
 “ infirmities, had become daily more violent. I thought  
 “ the situation might agree with him, for it is healthy, and  
 “ more beautifully pleasant, than most parts of Burgundy:  
 “ its site is near the town, but on the other side of the river,  
 “ which washes with its stream the verdant banks of the  
 “ priory<sup>f</sup>.”

But it did not seem that this genial air of St. Marcellus, that its flowery lawns, and silver stream, could restore vigour to the expiring life of Abeillard. On the contrary he grew worse, and perhaps what was meant to relieve him, only accelerated his end. Sensible then that all human means could not avert the blow, he cheerfully submitted to it, and prepared to meet his fate with the cool composure of a christian philosopher. He resumed, as well as he was able, the course of life he had practised at Cluni: he studied, prayed, and meditated. Even he did more. The confraternity of St. Marcellus begged that they also might partake of his instructions, and he made an effort to satisfy their request. He wrote some discourses for them; and when his hand could obey no longer, he dictated what remained, in a feeble voice, to the monks who sat attentive round him<sup>g</sup>.

“ Occupied in these exercises, concludes Peter, the visitor of the gospel found him, not asleep, but watching.  
 “ He found him truly watching, and he called him, with  
 “ the wife virgins, to the banquet of eternal bliss. He had

<sup>f</sup> Pet. Cluniac. Ep.

<sup>g</sup> Ibid.

BOOK VII. “ his lamp full of oil, that is; a conscience replete with the  
 “ works of a holy life.—The virulence of his disorder in-  
 “ creasing, in a few days, he was brought to that goal, to-  
 “ wards which all the generations of men are hastening.  
 “ With what sentiments of devotion he then first declared  
 “ his faith, and afterwards made the confession of his sins;  
 “ with what ardent affection he received the body of his re-  
 “ deemer, which was to carry him to eternal rest; and how  
 “ earnestly he commended both soul and body, here and  
 “ for ever, into the hands of his maker; many holy men  
 “ can witness, and with them the whole convent of St.  
 “ Marcellus<sup>h</sup>.”

Abeillard died in his sixty-third year, on the twenty-first of April, in the year 1142.

His character.

The reader who has seen the detached parts of Abeillard's character, may with ease collect the scattered members, and view at once the general portrait.—He was born with uncommon abilities, and in a better age, had they been directed to other purposes, their display might have given more solid glory to their possessor, and more real advantage to mankind. But he was to take the world as he found it, for he could not correct its vicious taste, nor indeed did he attempt it. On the contrary, the vicious taste of the age seemed to accord with the most prominent features of his mind. He loved controversy, was pleased with the sound of his own voice, and, in his most favourite researches, rather looked for quibbles and evasive sophistry, than for truth and the conviction of reason. He was a disputatious logician therefore, and in this consisted all his philosophy.—His divinity was much of the same complexion. When

<sup>h</sup> Pet. Cluniac. Ep.

When we confider him as a writer, not much more can be added to his praife. He is obfcure, laboured, and inelegant; nor do I difcover any traces of that genius and vivid energy of foul, which he certainly poffeffed, and which rendered him fo formidable in the fchools of philofophy. Even when he defcribes his own misfortunes, and is the hero of his own tale, the ftory is languid, and it labours on through a tedious and digreffive narration of incidents. In his theological tracts he is more jejune, and in his letters, he has not the elegance, nor the harmony, nor the foul of Heloifa. Therefore, did we not know, how much his abilities were extolled by his contemporaries, what encomiums they gave to his pen, and how much the proudeft difputants of the age feared the fire of his tongue, we certainly fhould be inclined to fay, perufing his works, that Abeillard was not an uncommon man.

Nor was he uncommon in his moral character. He had not to thank nature for any great degree of fenfibility, that fource of pain and of pleafure, of virtue and of vice. Thrown, from early youth, into habits, which could not meliorate his difpofitions, he became felfifh, opiniative, and vain-glorious. What did not ferve to gratify his own humour, called for little of his regard. He wifhed to appear above the common feelings of humanity, for his philofophy was not of a nature to make him the friend of man. Of religion he knew little more than the fplendid theory; and its amiable precepts were too obvious and familiar to engage the attention, and modify the heart, of an abftrufe and speculative reafoner.—When he loved Heloifa, it was not her perfon, nor her charms, nor her abilities, nor her virtues, which he loved;

BOOK VII. loved; he sought only his own gratification, and in its pursuit, no repulsion of innocence could thwart him, no voice of duty, of friendship, of unguarded confidence, could impede his headlong progress. He suffered; and from that moment rather he became a man. We may blame him perhaps, that he should so easily forget Heloise; but I have said, that he never really loved her. More than other men, he was not free to command his affections; and from motives of religion, perhaps even of compassion, he wished in her breast to check that ardent flame, which burned to no other purpose, than to render her heart miserable, and her life forlorn.

To erase these unfavourable impressions, which the mind has conceived of Abeillard, we must view him in distress, smarting from oppression and unprovoked malevolence. There was, I know, in his character something which irritated opposition, whether it was a love of singularity, an asperity of manners, or a consciousness of superior talents, which he did not disguise. However this might be, the behaviour of his enemies was always harsh, and sometimes cruel; and him we pity.—He now became a religious, a benevolent, and a virtuous man; and thousands reaped benefit from his instructions, as they were tutored by his example.—The close of his unhappy life was to the eye of the christian spectator its most brilliant period. His sun, which through its long revolution, had been often obscured by dark clouds and pallid vapours, now descended in a mild radiance, and disappeared with glory. In his death he was the great and good man, the philosopher and the christian. The all-ruling hand of providence, which made us what we are,

are, can best correct the accidental depravity of our natures, and perfect his own work, sometimes in the sunshine of prosperity; but oftener in the chilling blast of tribulation. BOOK VII.

Peter the venerable, whose benevolence of character, while it threw a veil over the imperfections of his friend, was careful to draw out his virtues, and to embellish them, has also described the abbot of St. Gildas.—“ He was the Socrates of France, he says, the Plato of Italy, the Aristotle of the schools. To his predecessors, in the walks of philosophy, he was equal, or superior. Confessed by all the master and model of eloquence, he charmed by the variety of his talents, and convinced by the subtilty of his reasoning. But then was his life most transcendent, when clothed in the habit of Cluni, and professing its rule, he became the true philosopher of Christ. Here happily terminating the last scene of a long life, he left us full of hope, that his eternal habitation would be with the virtuous and the wise.”

There is more of panegyric, than of simple truth in these lines; but they fell without flattery from the pen of Peter, while he wished to sooth the aching heart of Heloisa.

The news of the death of Abeillard was carried to Cluni, and the whole convent lamented his loss. Peter mourned for him as for a friend, snatched immaturally away, just as he began to know his worth, and to admire his virtues. Vainly he had sometimes flattered himself, that heaven might indulge his wishes, and give him longer the company of a man, from whose conversation and advice he could draw comfort and counsel, in the arduous duties of his office, and

The abbot of Cluni writes an account of his death to Heloisa.

<sup>1</sup> Ret. Cluniac. Ep.

BOOK VII. and from whom also the whole community of Cluni might derive such essential benefits. His death however was not an unexpected shock, and was therefore less painful; from the first moment he had entered his gates, he saw he was a flower, wounded at the root, which must soon wither and fall.

When his good heart had indulged these mournful thoughts, and a solemn service, agreeably to the practice of the Roman church, had been performed for the repose of the departed soul; Peter well saw he had another office of friendship to execute, which could not be any longer postponed. This was to acquaint Heloisa of the event.—He knew the tender tie which bound her to Abeillard; at all events, as he had been the founder of the Paraclet, its benefactor, and its friend, it was proper they should have notice of his death. Often did he reflect, how he could communicate the doleful tidings best: he was not personally known to Heloisa; he would therefore, he thought, adopt that method, which, from his knowledge of human nature, would probably make the least painful impression.—Since Abeillard had been at Cluni, he had received letters from the abbess, probably to inquire after the health of his guest, and she had sent him some presents, as a mark of her esteem<sup>k</sup>.

He begins his letter by saying, how much her attention had pleased him, and that, on her own account alone, he had felt the most sentimental joy from her letters. “ I wished, says he, instantly to have replied, for my heart “ was full; but business, and the troublesome cares of “ office,

<sup>k</sup> Pet. Cluniac. Ep.

“ office, to which I am obliged to give way, hindered me. BOOK VII.

“ With some difficulty I now steal a day, and I give it to  
 “ you.”—He is sensible, he observes, that he should have  
 made some return for the warm regard she had expressed for  
 him, and which her presents also had attested; that he  
 should have said how much he loved her in the Lord.

The venerable man then proceeds with much gallantry:  
 “ But it is not just now, says he, that I begin to love you:  
 “ I remember what my heart felt for you many years ago.  
 “ When first I heard your name, and fame reported the  
 “ progress you had made in human literature, I was but a  
 “ young man. Then, I recollect, it was said, that a girl,  
 “ though engaged in the world, was busied in the pursuits  
 “ of science, and in the thorny paths of worldly philosophy.  
 “ This was rare; but it was added that, neither pleasure  
 “ nor amusements could draw her, by their allurements,  
 “ from the objects of her laudable inquiry. And at  
 “ a time, when almost the whole world, shamefully indolent,  
 “ had ceased from these laudable pursuits, and wisdom  
 “ could hardly find where to rest its foot, not only in the  
 “ company of the softer sex, which had totally renounced  
 “ her, but even amongst men, you, Heloisa, by your exalted  
 “ studies left all the women far behind you, and but  
 “ few men could enter into competition with you. But  
 “ soon your pursuits were turned to a better object: the  
 “ gospels took place of logic, Paul of philosophy, and  
 “ Christ of Plato; to the academic grove succeeded the  
 “ retired cloister. Now were you truly called the philosophic  
 “ maid.”

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## BOOK VII.

He then continues his encomium in many allusions from the books of scripture, and exhorts her to perseverance for the advantage of many, who were now to draw edification from her example, and instruction from her lips. “ With  
 “ pleasure, says he, could I discuss these matters with you,  
 “ and dwell on the subject, for I am charmed with your  
 “ erudition, but still more am I charmed by the fame of  
 “ your religious life.”—He tells her how much it is his wish, that she were an inhabitant of Marcigni, (a convent of nuns not far from Cluni), and he relates their admirable virtues. “ These, I know, continues he, you and your sisters  
 “ may possess, even in greater measure, and it may not be  
 “ possible to add to them; but would not our republic, of  
 “ which Marcigni is a member, be enriched by the treasures  
 “ you would so liberally lavish on us? But it has not entered  
 “ into the schemes of providence to bestow *this* blessing on  
 “ Cluni.”

Hitherto he had not mentioned the name of Abeillard, or most distantly alluded to him; he had run out into compliment, and the artful induction of such matter, as would please by its elegance and familiar application, while it prepared her mind for the shock, which would not be so violent, when she saw that the hand which gave it was humane and gentle.—The last line, “ But it has not entered into  
 “ the schemes of providence to bestow *this* blessing on Clu-  
 “ ni,” most happily introduces the painful subject. “ You  
 “ heaven will not give us, he says, but it has given us your  
 “ Abeillard, Heloisa, that servant of God, and that christian philosopher, whose name shall ever be mentioned  
 “ with respect and honour.”—He then relates his faint-like  
 life



life at Cluni, in the words I have already copied, and in the conclusion of this charming panegyric, (which was calculated to fill her mind with the enthusiasm of virtue, and to raise it, in warm gratitude, to him, who had dealt so kindly with Abeillard), he tells her that his health had begun to decline, and that he had sent him to the mild air of St. Marcellus. Nor does he forget still to praise his exemplary deportment, till the last scene can be withheld no longer: but so gradually had she been prepared for it, that it breaks imperceptibly upon her, and she hardly feels its shock.

Having told the melancholy tale in a manner, which did honour to his heart and head, he concludes in these consoling words: " Thus did Abeillard close his days. He, " whose learning was vast, and of whom almost the four " corners of the world had been taught to speak, became " the disciple of him, who was meek and humble of heart. " He is gone to his master. And you, dear sister, who were " once his wife, but whom afterwards a purer tie united to " him, repose now in the certain hope that the day will " come, when he will again be given to you. In the mean " time, remember him, when your thoughts are raised to " God; remember also me, and my brethren at Cluni<sup>1</sup>."

We know not, after all, how Heloisa received the tidings; for no reliance can be placed on the accounts, which some authors, in wanton playfulness, have chosen to give of it<sup>m</sup>. That it affected her much, is certain; because it would revive a thousand sad ideas, which had long been associated in her mind: otherwise, the enthusiasm of her passion had

<sup>1</sup> Pet. Cluniac. Ep.

<sup>m</sup> Vie d'Abeil. p. 269.

BOOK VII. spent itself; she was now near her fortieth year; absence had applied its soothing balsam; and religion, reason, and virtue, had all conspired to call her thoughts from earth to heaven. But if she felt the most pungent sorrow, it was but natural; and if she indulged it, it was surely pardonable. The whole society of the Paraclet may likewise be permitted to mingle their tears with her's.

She requests  
his body, and  
obtains it.

The reader will perhaps recollect that Abeillard, in his first letter to Heloisa, had requested that, when or wheresoever he should die, his body might be conveyed to the Paraclet, that so he might partake more securely of their prayers. At the time, this request had greatly agitated Heloisa, and it seemed to press like the hand of death upon her heart: she thought it cruel and ungenerous: but she could never forget it, and as the event, which she feared so much, had now happened, it would be her first duty to discharge the obligation. There is likewise within us a natural propension to possess the last remains of our friends, though they be but lifeless ashes, or cold dust.

Abeillard, it is probable, had lost sight of a circumstance, which was once so near to his heart, or had neglected to mention it, as a dying petition, to Peter of Cluni, or to the monks who closed his eyes. But Heloisa did not therefore think herself released from her engagement: she could propose it to the abbot of Cluni, nor could she doubt of his compliance. It was, besides, the united prayer of the Paraclet, that the ashes of their founder should repose within their walls. She therefore wrote to Peter, thanking him for his letter, and all his kind attentions to Abeillard, and then urged, in warm terms, what had formerly been his request.

request, which she strengthened with her own and the joint petition of all her sisters<sup>n</sup>. This letter is lost.

The good man felt at once the propriety of the request, and though he wished much to have retained the corse of Abeillard, whose dust would do honour to Cluni, for ages yet to come; yet he should not, he thought, be justified in so doing: he communicated the petition of the Paraclet to his community, who unanimously resolved that it must not be complied with; and the monks of St. Marcellus, who were actually in possession of the body, were even more averse. They had buried it in solemn pomp, and were preparing to raise a monument to his memory. The abbot in vain remonstrated, and urged the strong plea and the merit of Heloïsa. In virtue of his post, he might have commanded a compliance; but this, from what motives, I know not, he did not chuse to do. He rather preferred another method, which was singular and romantic.

Some months had passed, during which nothing more was said about the removal of the body, and it seemed as if the scheme were deserted. Probably he had not neglected to inform Heloïsa of his fixed resolution to oblige her, and had made such arrangements, as might be most proper for its accomplishment. In due time he went over to the priory of St. Marcellus. It was in the month of November. They could not suspect his intentions, as he was their superior, and various business might be the motive of his coming. In a dark night, however, while the community was asleep, the body, by the aid of his friends, who abetted the design, was taken from the vault; a carriage was ready to receive it;

<sup>n</sup> Vie d'Abeil. p. 269.

BOOK VII. it; and they conveyed it, with all expedition, to the abbey of the Paraclet. Peter himself attended, and escorted the convoy<sup>o</sup>.

The shock was great which Heloisa felt; but she had not time to indulge it. The abbot of Cluni was announced, and instantly he appeared. She had not been apprised of his coming, and he well imagined that his sudden entrance might break the painful impression, which the mournful tidings, and more than that, the presence of the poor remains of Abeillard, would make on her mind. Indeed, gratitude she expressed for his kind services, and happy she was to see a man, for whom she entertained the most exalted esteem. But grief, and a bursting heart overpowered every other sentiment, and she withdrew.

In the mean time, preparations were making for the solemn celebration of the obsequies, and the body was carried into the church, covered with black, and surrounded by burning tapers. It was placed before the altar. Peter of Cluni, though fatigued from his journey, would perform as principal minister. The nuns assembled in their choir, with Heloisa at their head; the sign was given, and the service opened in slow and plaintive music.—He that has imagination may now picture to himself Heloisa, in the finest attitude of resigned grief, with her eyes sometimes raised towards heaven, but often turned towards Abeillard, and glued to the mournful object.—He will represent the holy sisterhood variously affected, but with their countenances rather full of hope, that if they have lost the founder of the Paraclet, they have him for an intercessor in heaven, who  
now

<sup>o</sup> Helois. Ep. ad Pet. Cluniac. p. 343.

now even kindly looks down upon them, and hears their prayers—and the venerable priest he will behold, standing at the altar, by his firm looks giving strength to the dejected, and animating the luke-warm by a display of the most sincere and unaffected piety. BOOK VII.

When the service was over, Peter made a discourse to the assembly: he spoke of the virtues of Abeillard, and of his death which was faint-like; he recommended an imitation of those virtues, and he prayed that his end might be like unto his. He acknowledged and magnified the loss which Cluni and the Paraclet had suffered; but then he inculcated submission to heaven. He glanced at the extraordinary endowments, the virtue, and the piety of Heloisa, from which every advantage might be derived, though the father of the Paraclet was no more: and he concluded with an earnest prayer for the prosperity and happiness of all those, who now attended this mournful ceremony<sup>P</sup>.

We are come to the last act of the tragic scene.—The corse was now raised from the bier, and carried to the vault, which stood open to receive it. The mourners attended in procession, and the doleful psalmody still continued. Peter, having wiped a tear from his eyes, distinctly pronounced the parting supplication, and threw dust upon the grave: the spectators took their last look; when the vault was closed, and all was silence.

The stay which the abbot made at the Paraclet, as he acquaints us, was very short<sup>Q</sup>. Business recalled him, and it was necessary he should return to pacify his brethren. Nor was it a moment to enjoy the company of Heloisa, whose mind

<sup>P</sup> Helois. Ep. ad Pet. Cluniac. p. 343.

<sup>Q</sup> Pet. Cluniac. Ep. p. 344.

BOOK VII. mind was too sorrowful to engage in conversation. She hung over Abeillard's grave, and was not easily drawn from the spot. What friendly advice and sympathizing kindness could offer, she received from him, and he settled some other business which she proposed to him. Again he exhorted the nuns to obedience, and to the steady observance of their rule; and parting from them, took his way towards Cluni.

Not long after this event, Heloisa wrote again to the abbot of Cluni. Her mind was more at ease; she might be fearful that her late behaviour had not pleased him; and she had some other requests to make. The letter is as follows.

She writes to  
Peter the  
venerable.

“ It was the kindness of heaven, most venerable father,  
“ which lately directed you to the Paraclet. We rejoiced,  
“ and we had reason to glory in your visit. Others may  
“ recount the benefits they have derived from your pre-  
“ fence; but I am at a loss to express, nor can my mind  
“ well tell, how useful, and how pleasing, it was to me.  
“ You were with us in the month of November last, when  
“ in our church you celebrated the sacred mysteries, and  
“ the Paraclet you recommended to the charge of the Holy  
“ Spirit. The discourse you delivered to us is warm on  
“ our memories; and never can we forget the treasure you  
“ entrusted to us, of the body of our dear master.—To me,  
“ in particular, whom you honour with the appellation of  
“ sister, as a pledge of your love and sincerity, was a singu-  
“ lar favour then also granted: when it shall please heaven  
“ to call me hence, thirty masses, you promised me, should  
“ be said at Cluni, for the repose of my soul; and you said,  
“ you would confirm that promise to me by a writing under  
“ your own seal. I now request you to fulfill that engage-  
“ ment.—

“ ment.—Send me also, if you please, another written BOOK VII.  
 “ deed, containing the absolution of Abeillard, in distinct  
 “ and fair characters, signed by yourself, which may be  
 “ hung upon his tomb.—And for the love of God and me,  
 “ do remember my son Astrolabius; if you can, try to pro-  
 “ cure a living for him from the bishop of Paris, or from  
 “ some other prelate. Farewell. May heaven watch over  
 “ you, and on some future day, again permit us to see you  
 “ at the Paraclet!”

This is the last letter of Heloisa which time has not destroyed. It contains sentiments, expressive of the gratitude she felt for the good abbot's kindness to her, and of the high opinion she entertained of him. It contains likewise some other matters which are not uninteresting; such as the thirty masses at Cluni, which Heloisa, enlightened and philosophical as she was, seemed to consider as a most singular favour; such as the *absolution* she requested for Abeillard. This was a devotional practice of the times. Abeillard had been accused of holding heterodox opinions, and had even been condemned, and when he died, his faith was still suspected by many; Heloisa therefore was desirous to procure a formal attestation from the abbot of Cluni, importing that he had expired in the faith of the church, and in the favour of its ministers. This was called an absolution, and it was usually fixed over the graves of the dead, that it might be read by the faithful.—Astrolabius is likewise mentioned in this letter. It is the second time only that his name occurs, and it never returns again, excepting in the abbot's reply. He was at this time more than twenty years old.

\* Fleury vol. xii.

## BOOK VII.

The abbot of  
Cluni's an-  
swer.

The abbot's reply.—“ I was pleased; dearest sister, and  
 “ not a little, by the perusal of your letter. From it I per-  
 “ ceived, that my stay at the Paraclet was not really so  
 “ transitory, for the recollection of it seems tenaciously  
 “ fixed upon your mind. It was not like the flying visit of  
 “ a traveller, who is hospitably entertained for one night,  
 “ and is thought of no more. How kind and indulgent you  
 “ were to me! Nothing seems to have been lost of all I  
 “ did, or said, not only when my discourses were delivered  
 “ intentionally for your instruction, but even when I con-  
 “ versed with you on common and familiar subjects. It is  
 “ the regard you have for me which has given so retentive  
 “ a power to your memory. Or perhaps you were influ-  
 “ enced by the words, written in the rules of our respective  
 “ orders, that in the persons of our guests we are to think  
 “ we receive Christ himself. I trust then, that I shall never  
 “ be forgotten at the Paraclet; and that to the father of  
 “ mercies, you and your sisters, will ever raise up your  
 “ hands for me. The return I can make to you, that I  
 “ daily do. Long before I knew you, you possessed a place  
 “ in my heart; and since I have known you, that place has  
 “ been enlarged by all the influence of the most sincere af-  
 “ fection.—The promise I made of the masses, I now ex-  
 “ ecute, and send you.—And with it you receive, what  
 “ you requested, the absolution of Abeillard, written and  
 “ signed by me.—As to Astrolabius, whom I adopt, because  
 “ he is your son, be assured, as soon as it shall be in my  
 “ power, I will do all I can to place him in some of the  
 “ great churches. But the thing is difficult; for I have  
 “ often experienced that our bishops, when application is  
 “ made



“made to them, make many difficulties, which are not  
“easily removed. For your sake, however, my best endea-  
“vours shall be exerted, and that as soon as may be. Fare  
“ye well.”

Abeillard's absolution.—“I Peter, abbot of Cluni, who  
“received Peter Abeillard into the number of my religious,  
“and who, having taken his body, by stealth, from the  
“grave, delivered it to Heloisa the abbess and to her nuns  
“at the Paraclet, do now, by the authority of God and  
“his saints, absolve him, in virtue of my office, from all  
“his sins. May he rest in peace<sup>1</sup>.”

These matters being thus settled, Heloisa, penfive, but  
resigned, recalled all her thoughts, and fixed them at the  
Paraclet. Indeed, there was no external object to engage  
them, for all that remained of Abeillard was there. For  
one-and-twenty years, which she had still to live, we hear  
no more of her, only that she was held in the highest esti-  
mation, that she was a pattern of every monastic and chris-  
tian virtue, and that, ever retaining the tenderest affection  
of a wife, she prayed unceasingly at her husband's tomb<sup>2</sup>.  
Surely there is something, at least, humane in the doctrine,  
which teaches us to hold an intercourse with the other world,  
and to believe that friendship may be serviceable even be-  
yond the grave!

I have before observed, that so uniform and unchequered  
is the monastic life, that the most minute account, or the  
accurate memoirs, of a nun's life, could not give us the  
smallest entertainment. And the misfortune is, that then  
there is the least to be said, when the pious recluse conforms

<sup>1</sup> Op. Abeil. p. 336.

<sup>2</sup> Notæ Quercet. p. 1195.

BOOK VII. best to her holy institute, and is the more perfect woman.

It will be a question with some, whether a nun, in any circumstances, merits the appellation of a perfect woman! Perfection, I believe, may be attained in all states; though that being, indubitably, is the most perfect, which answers best to the designs of its creation. Why, or for what end, we were made, is a point not so easily perhaps to be decided. Am I not free to chuse my own state of life; to withdraw, if I please, from the society of mortals; and to live only to myself and to my maker? If I owe anything to society, that duty shall first be cancelled, and my release will be signed. The life of a recluse may be termed selfish, and so it is. But on what principle does he act, who engages in all the pleasures and the pursuits of life? So little real virtue is there, even among those who talk most of philanthropy and of social kindness, that a few, I think, may be allowed to secede from the great mass, and look for happiness in the practice of such duties as please them best, and where they fancy it may be found. If Europe stands in need of greater population, it may be effected by the suppression of vice, and not by exposing more to its baneful infection. I would open indeed the doors of convents, because an improper use is often made of their locks and bars; but I would compel none to go out, who preferred the holy retirement of a cloister, to the wide expanse of heaven, and to the anxious and corroding cares of active life.—From these Heloisa was now free; for as her heart separated from the world, her happiness increased. That had been the source of all her misery. To the exercises of prayer, meditation, study, and of many other innocent and amusing duties, we will now leave

leave her, and turn to some events of importance, which occupy the period of twenty years, on which I am entered. BOOK VII.

Innocent the second was just dead, having filled the chair of St. Peter thirteen years. He was a man of worth and abilities; but little occurs in the annals of his reign, momentous or interesting. Peter of Leon was chosen, by a powerful faction, to oppose him, and he supported himself for some time, even in Rome itself, against all the weight of Innocent. It was only death that closed this formidable opposition, which lasted for eight years. Peter had taken the name of Anacletus. His principal friend was Roger duke of Sicily; while the rest of the christian princes espoused the cause of Innocent, who seems to have been canonically elected.—It is curious to behold the two pontiffs, mutually fulminating their anathemas against each other, as ill humour or a shew of success gave energy to their operations: but the consequences of these schisms in the christian church were fatal; they relaxed its discipline, and spread the evils of anarchy and civil strife. Innocent II.

It was only since its aggrandisement, which had now risen to an enormous bulk, that the papal throne had become an object of cabal and ambition. In the first ages of the church we read of no anti-popes; for who would run after a post of labour, of humility, of mortification, and of suffering? It was the duty of the first pastor to set the example of these virtues. But when Rome, from her seven hills, declared herself the mistress of the world, in a sense more extensive even than she had known in the days of her greatest martial splendour, where was the man of ambition whose eye would not be raised to the gorgeous throne?

To

BOOK VII. To Innocent succeeded Celestin and Lucius, both the  
 Eugenius III. second of the name, whose joint reigns did not exceed many  
 months; when we come to Eugenius the third, of whom I  
 have already spoken. He had been a monk of Clairvaux,  
 and a disciple of Bernard. When the saint heard of his  
 promotion, he thus wrote to the cardinals: “ God forgive  
 “ you! What have you done? You have taken a dead man  
 “ from his grave, and replunged him into a crowd and the  
 “ tumults of life. Where could your thoughts be, when  
 “ you chose this rustic man; when you tore the axe and  
 “ spade from his hand, dragged him to the palace, raised  
 “ him on a throne, and clothed him in purple? To me the  
 “ change is ridiculous. A little man, covered with rags,  
 “ in a moment is exalted to a post, from whence he may  
 “ rule over princes and bishops, may dispose of kingdoms  
 “ and empires! There may be something miraculous, I  
 “ own, in this event; still, I am not without my apprehen-  
 “ sions that, modest as he is and habituated to retirement,  
 “ he will be little adapted to acquit himself of his high  
 “ functions with a becoming dignity.”

He wrote another letter to the pope himself: “ You are  
 “ now, says he to him, in possession of a higher place; but  
 “ is it more safe? Has not danger increased with your ex-  
 “ altation?—How happy should I die, could I see the  
 “ church of God as it was in former ages, when the apostles  
 “ let go their nets to take souls, and not to draw in gold  
 “ and silver.—In all you do, remember you are mortal.  
 “ Let the recollection of the deaths of your predecessors,  
 “ some of whom your own eyes saw expire, ever keep the  
 “ awful

“ awful thought in your mind. The short period of their BOOK VII.  
 “ glory should tell you, how soon you may be called to fol-  
 “ low them.”

At his accession Rome was much agitated by the preaching of Arnold of Brescia and the designs of his followers: Eugenius therefore retired, and seeing no prospect of the restoration of peace, continued his journey into France.— The popes, at this time, were often obliged to retire from Rome. It was not at once that the people could be induced quietly to submit to their unnatural jurisdiction; and besides, a very powerful faction, which the anti-popes occasionally headed, gave life to an opposition, which was easily irritated, which great condescensions could not permanently satisfy, and which, at the election of every new master, was ready to petition for redress of grievances, to mutiny, and to rebel. By steady and cool exertions they might have carried their point, and have torn from the Roman pontiff those insignia of worldly grandeur, which belonged not to him; and in such an undertaking, the princes of Europe, it seems, had they known their real interest, would have espoused the cause of the Roman people: but these very princes, and this very people, when the paroxysm of good sense was over, were themselves the greatest support of the unchristian power. It was from passion rather and testiness of humour, and not from conviction of its inexpediency, that they opposed its progress: they were ignorant of their own rights, and uninformed of the real principles of christianity, and so basely superstitious, that the mere threat of excommunication disarmed their justest fury, and reduced them to obedience and the most submissive penitence.

• Ep. 23.

When

When Eugenius was obliged to fly from Italy he retired to France. Here he might rely on finding a secure asylum. It is remarkable that this kingdom, which has always been tenacious of its ecclesiastical privileges, and which gave less to Rome than any other christian state, should, on every occasion, have stood foremost to protect the persons of the pontiffs, and even then receive them with respect, obey their instructions, court their good will, and support, at their own expence, the splendour of their courts, when they condemned the very principles of their conduct, and could but applaud the opposition of their enemies. The enlarged and enlightened minds of the French nation could ever distinguish betwixt abuse and principle, and could even then respect the person of their first bishop, when they pitied his behaviour, and viewed the errors, into which the false maxims of his court had impelled him.

Eugenius was the mover of the second crusade, and lived to see its issue. He was a prince of great private virtues, and the protector of the learned and the good. Peter the venerable has drawn his character: he knew him well, and was too honest to flatter, or to give unmerited praise. He had been with him in Rome. “ I never knew, says he, a  
 “ more constant friend, a brother more sincere, or a more  
 “ indulgent father. His ear was patient to listen, and his  
 “ tongue prompt to answer; and not as a master to his  
 “ inferior, but as an equal to his equal, and sometimes as  
 “ an inferior to his lord. There was no pomp, nothing  
 “ arbitrary, no majesty in his deportment; justice, humility, and truth had possessed the whole man. Every petition I made, was either granted, or he refused it upon  
 “ terms

" terms so reasonable, that I could not complain."<sup>w</sup>—He BOOK VII.  
 fat eight years, and died regretted. Anastasius the fourth,  
 an old and experienced man, succeeded to him, who only  
 saw the end of his first year.

We are come to Adrian the fourth. This was Nicolas Adrian IV.  
 Breakspear, born in England, of low and indigent parents.  
 His father, to provide at least for his own wants, became a  
 monk at St. Albans, and left Nicolas and his mother to con-  
 tend with distress and penury. The youth was born with  
 abilities, was sprightly, and ingenious, but indigence was a  
 bar to all his wishes, and he could not even procure the  
 common aid of a master in the grammar school. When  
 hunger pressed, he went to the door of his father's convent,  
 and begged for bread. The proud monk was offended, he  
 blushed that his family should be thus disgraced, and re-  
 proaching him one day with his indolence and want of spi-  
 rit, turned him from the door, with an injunction that he  
 would never return more.

Nicolas saw, at once, the horror of his situation, and that  
 he had no friend but his own heart to look to. But if fate  
 had marked him for a beggar, it would be more honourable,  
 he thought, to practise his profession, at a distance from  
 his own country. Forlorn and friendless he wandered about  
 for some time, when an occasion presenting itself, he crossed  
 over into France, and landed, with all the world before  
 him, and providence his guide. But the horizon lowered  
 round him. What could he do in this foreign land, un-  
 protected and ignorant of the language? He did what he  
 could; he laboured when he could find employment, and

<sup>w</sup> Pet. Cluniac, Ep. ad Bern.

BOOK VII. when necessity compelled him, he begged. Thus successful he travelled on, till he arrived at St. Rufus, a convent of regular canons, not far from Avignon in Provence.

Nicolas, as his historian relates, had a good figure, and his countenance was remarkably engaging. He presented himself to the abbot of St. Rufus, and asked for employment. He was admitted, as a menial servant, into the convent. Fortune, he thought, for the first time, now smiled upon him, and he was resolved to co-operate: he laboured hard, and strove, by the most active services, to render himself agreeable to his employers. His endeavours were successful; and very soon they observed that Nicolas had abilities which might be better employed. They admired his prudence, his judgment, and his cautious reserve. Very soon, therefore, the abbot offered him the habit of his order, expressing great approbation of his conduct, and a wish that he would enroll himself among the monks of St. Rufus. With exultation he accepted the proffered dignity, which seemed more than ample enough to fill the wildest schemes, his fancy had ever formed. His life was a new process; he studied, he conversed with the learned, and he reflected much. By application his abilities expanded, and he rapidly advanced in science. His genius was penetrating, and he possessed a fluency of speech which was uncommon, and which culture soon rendered eloquent and persuasive. His love of retirement and of discipline was also exemplary. Thus he lived, the honour and admiration of his convent, for many years, when the abbot dying, Nicolas Breakspear was unanimously chosen his successor.

It



It was not long, however, before they repented of the choice they had made. The new abbot was a rigid man, and he exacted a regularity from his monks, which did not please them. They carried their complaints to Rome, and urged many groundless charges against him. Eugenius who was then pope, cited the parties before him. He admired the wisdom, the modesty, and the prudence of the abbot, and well saw from what source their complaints originated. He attempted to reconcile them, and seemed to have succeeded: but the evil was too inveterate, and soon they repeated their accusations with more violence than before. "I see, said Eugenius to the malcontents, from whence your dissatisfaction comes: go, and chuse another abbot, who may please you better: Nicolas shall remain with me." He staid; and the pope finding him very intelligent and expert in business, employed him in his court, and soon after created him cardinal bishop of Albano. He was afterwards sent legate into Norway, on the very arduous business of instructing that barbarous nation, and so well did he execute his commission, and give general satisfaction in all that he did, that, on the death of Anastasius, in 1154, he was the next day elected pontiff, under the name of Adrian the fourth.

The tiara had no sooner touched the brows of Adrian, than he felt that swell of heart, which heroes and sceptered kings are said to feel.—The faction of Arnold was then powerful; they were guilty of excesses, and had publicly insulted a cardinal of Rome. The pontiff laid the city under an interdict, and refused to take it off, till the factious demagogue and his adherents should be expelled from the

BOOK VII. walls. For five months the service of the church was suspended, when the senators, compelled by the entreaties of the people, waited on the pope, begged his forgiveness, and promised to comply with his commands. Adrian was satisfied. Surrounded by his bishops and cardinals, and the nobility of Rome, he then showed himself to the people: they received him with bursts of the sincerest acclamations: the interdict was withdrawn: and peace and unanimity seemed once more restored to the distracted city.

Frederic Barbarossa, king of the Romans, came to Rome to receive the imperial crown. He was admitted to an interview with Adrian; but neglecting to take hold of his holiness's stirrup, as the ceremonial seemed to require, the pontiff refused to admit him to the kiss of peace. A long conference took place, but Adrian was inflexible: the king then advised with his nobles, when the most ancient of them assured him, that what the pope required had been practised by his predecessors. Frederic was obliged to submit; and the next day, in the sight of his army, he held the stirrup, and fullenly walked by his side, while Adrian advanced about a hundred yards: the pontiff then embraced him, and presented him with the crown, in the church of St. Peter.

Adrian, however, and Frederic, were not of a character to be friends. The former entertained all the romantic ideas of prerogative, which had once filled the breast of Gregory the seventh; and the latter knew too well his own consequence, was too proud, too opinionated, and too informed, to submit to such extravagant pretensions. They quarrelled therefore, were reconciled, and again quarrelled, Adrian rather shewing submission, than boldly meeting

meeting his adversary, till death opportunely intervened, and divided the combatants. BOOK VII.

Adrian also contended with William the bad, second king of Sicily. The king had applied to him for the confirmation of his dominions, which he held of the holy see. This the pope refused; on which William entered the lands of his holiness, and laid them waste with fire and sword. Adrian excommunicated the sacrilegious plunderer, and declared his subjects free from their allegiance. The Sicilians immediately sent a deputation to the pontiff, requesting he would accept their submission, and receive their fealty. Adrian put himself at the head of a formidable army, and advanced into the enemy's country: on all sides they submitted, and owned him their master. William, now sensible no time was to be lost, proposed terms of peace, which were accepted: a treaty was soon after concluded on conditions advantageous to the court of Rome.

He granted to Henry Plantagenet permission to conquer Ireland, and to establish in it the purity of the christian faith. The king had sent a messenger to compliment Adrian on his accession to the triple crown, and formally to present the petition, in question. "No one doubts it, says he in his bull to Henry, and you yourself know, that Ireland, and all the islands, which have embraced the christian faith, belong to the Roman see."—I know not the grounds of this extraordinary pretension, which extended equally to England, though Henry, in this instance, would hardly have admitted the claim. It is the poor boy, who begged bread at St. Albans, that now holds this language to Henry the second of England!—With the bull Adrian sent a ring, ornamented

BOOK VII. ornamented with a rich emerald, which signified that he invested Henry with his kingdom of Ireland.

It was John of Salisbury, formerly a scholar of Peter Abeillard, and now chaplain to the archbishop of Canterbury, who was employed on this embassy. Being at Beneventum with Adrian, who loved him as his countryman, and who admired his abilities and his honest virtues, when the discourse, one day, ran on subjects which were mutually interesting, and the pope was unfolding the secrets of his heart: "My friend, said Adrian, it may seem that, in  
" what I told you of my early life, I had much to suffer.  
" Suffer I did; but when I compare it with the miseries  
" which now surround me, I should rather say that, I was  
" then at ease and happy. Well, I think, would it have  
" been for me, had I never quitted my native home, or  
" had I remained an humble monk, buried within the walls  
" of St. Rufus. Still, I was not free to oppose the voice of  
" heaven. I have lead a weary life betwixt the hammer and  
" the anvil; and now I trust, the Lord will put his hand  
" under the burden which he has laid upon my shoulders;  
" for, indeed, it overpowers me."

On another occasion he asked his friend, what the world said of him and the Roman court? John frankly answered:  
" They say that, Rome shews herself not so much the pa-  
" rent, as the stepmother of the christian world. It abounds  
" with scribes and pharisees, who will not support with a  
" fingle finger the load which they heap on others. They  
" domineer insolently over the clergy, and give no exam-  
" ple to the faithful. They amass wealth, and load their  
" houses with ornaments of gold and silver, into which  
" never

“ never are the poor admitted, unless when vanity may be  
 “ indulged. Every thing is said to be venal, even justice  
 “ itself.—From this censure a few, I am told, who do their  
 “ duty, are exempt. But it is the Roman bishop who is the  
 “ great and insupportable burden. The complaint is, that  
 “ he builds palaces, while the churches are falling, and  
 “ that, while the altars are neglected, he is seen pompously  
 “ clothed in gold and purple.”—“ And what is your own  
 “ opinion of me?” said Adrian, not offended by his honest  
 freedom.—“ Your question, replied John, disconcerts me  
 “ not a little. I must pass for a hypocrite, if I dissent from  
 “ the public voice; and, if I join it, I shall sin, perhaps,  
 “ against that respect which is due to your holiness.”—The  
 pope insisted that he should declare his sentiments.—“ If I  
 “ must speak then, continued he; it is my opinion that,  
 “ we should obey your instructions, though in all things we  
 “ should not imitate your example. The world applauds  
 “ and flatters you; they call you father and lord. If you be  
 “ our father, why exact gifts from your children? And if  
 “ our lord: how comes it that even this Roman populace  
 “ does not fear you? Holy father, you are not in the right  
 “ path. What has been gratuitously given to you, that do  
 “ you give with the same liberal hand.”—Adrian smiled,  
 and praising the ingenuous candour of the ambassador, begged  
 that, if he heard any more evil said of him, he would not  
 fail to let him know it. “ But as to the contributions, said  
 “ he, which we receive from Christendom, you have read  
 “ the fable of the stomach and the members: how unjust  
 “ was their complaint; and how deservedly did they languish,  
 “ when the heart no longer supplied its vivifying  
 “ influence.

BOOK VII. "influence. We are the stomach, you the complaining members."—John now smiled in his turn; shook his head, and departed.

This same John of Salisbury was afterwards the great friend and constant companion of Thomas Becket, whose life he wrote, and who, soon after the death of his master, for his eminent qualities, was chosen bishop of Chartres.

Thus, in the midst of an agitated ocean, of which he himself was the principal mover, comfortless and dissatisfied, lived Adrian the fourth: he saw the end of four years and nine months, when he died, in 1159, esteemed by the Roman court, whose patrimony he had increased by some considerable acquisitions, and praised for his disinterestedness, which he carried to a pitch of affected insensibility; for he permitted his mother, who saw him raised to the popedom, and who survived her son, barely to subsist on the alms she collected in the church of Canterbury\*.

Alexander the third succeeded to the chair of St. Peter, which he filled for two-and-twenty years; but it is foreign from my purpose to enter on the transactions of this turbulent and interesting period.

State of  
England.

While Rome and the church was governed by the masters I have described, the political hemisphere of Europe continued to be agitated by war and internal dissensions. In England it was a period remarkably melancholy. Stephen had usurped the throne, and though possessed of virtues, which, in other circumstances, might have rendered his reign glorious and his subjects happy, yet was he necessitated to enter into engagements with his clergy and nobility, from

\* Fleury vol. xv. Nat. Alex. sæc. xii. from original authors.

from which many fatal evils ensued. He supported himself, BOOK VII. however, though he found neither happiness nor tranquillity; while the country was involved in a series of intestine disorders, to the last degree ruinous and destructive.—In the mean time, young Henry, the rightful heir to the crown, led on by his good genius, was tutored in the school of adversity, where he learned the practice of those great and splendid virtues, which would soon raise him to the throne of England, and make him the greatest monarch in the christian world.—Stephen died in 1154.

Lewis the seventh, surnamed the younger, because he reigned some years with his father, had been king since the year 1137. He was early embroiled with the court of Rome, though he was esteemed religious, and even, on some occasions, rather inclined to superstition. But the princes of his realm were particularly turbulent, and among these no one so much as Theobald, count of Champagne, brother to Stephen of England, who had protected Abeillard, and whom the monks extolled as the pattern of all princely virtues. In his character, however, he was mutinous and headstrong, and ever at war with his sovereign. This crime he expiated by charitable donations to the church, and by endowing monasteries: or if his sins were not thus forgiven him, at least he gained friends, whose interest was often most highly serviceable, and among these Bernard of Clairvaux stood foremost.

State of  
France.

The disturbances and unsettled state of England were to France a fortunate event. The factious and evil spirit which often passed out of that country into Normandy, and from thence carried discord and the seeds of war into the

BOOK VII. neighbouring provinces, was too much engaged at home.—Lewis had favoured the cause of the usurper, and he had motives for it; at all events, it was his interest to keep alive the animosity of both parties, and to draw tranquility from their dissensions.—The situation of France, upon the whole, had seldom been so calm. Religious disturbances there were, part of which I have related, and Rome, by her imprudent interference, scattered occasional discord. But Suger of St. Denys, who has been called the father of his country, was at the head of public affairs: and France could boast of many other great and good men, both in church and state.—It was likewise judged a fortunate circumstance, which, as it strengthened the royal domain, so did it seem to promise a more permanent security, that their king should have married Eleanor, the heiress of Guienne, by which so great an accession was made to their territories. Human foresight, however, which can sometimes read success in a visible combination of events, cannot so controul their progress, as to keep at a distance some untoward circumstances, which often obtrude themselves unforeseen, and at once break to pieces the wisest schemes of sublunary policy. Such was this boasted marriage.—But I am detaining my reader on this minute detail, while a larger and more interesting object calls for all his attention.

The second  
crusade.

By the success, which attended the first crusade, and by the victories, which the christian princes, established in the east, afterwards gained, four considerable states had been formed in the heart of Asia. These were Edeffa, Tripoli, Antioch, and Jerusalem. They had subsisted for more than forty years, and their territory and power were greatly extended.



extended. Unanimity would have rendered them invincible, and by occasional succours from Europe, the strength of the infidel nations might have been broken, and perhaps gradually annihilated. But discord soon divided their councils, and weakened their arms. Baldwin, the third, a youth of thirteen years, reigned in Jerufalem, under the regency of his mother; Joffelin de Courtenay was count of Edeffa; Raymond de Poitiers, uncle to Eleanor of France, was prince of Antioch; and the great grandson of Raymond of Toulouse, commanded in Tripoli. These princes were all of the French nation.—Noradin, fultan of Aleppo, a powerful and active prince, watched with a curious eye every motion of the christian enemy, and seeing their diffentions, he availed himself of the fortunate moment: he laid fiege to Edeffa, and carried it. The town was pillaged, the inhabitants maffacred, and the churches polluted.

The fituation of the other ftates was now alarming. The confederacy, which united them, was broken: the enemy had penetrated into their territories, and feemed to meditate new conquests: an infant king fat on the throne of Jerufalem: and it was rumoured that the proud conqueror was preparing to carry war againft the walls of Antioch — In thefe circumftances, of general confternation, it was refolved to apply to Europe for immediate affiftance, and ambaffadors were difpatched with the weighty commiffion. This was in the year 1145.

They waited on the pope, who was Eugenius III. He was moved by the melancholy tale, and as the French nation would probably be moft interefted in the fate of their countrymen in Afia, he wrote a letter to their king, wherein he

BOOK VII. strongly exhorts him and his people to engage in the holy warfare; and he promises them all the spiritual gifts, and extraordinary privileges, which his predecessor Urban had imparted to the first crusaders.

The messenger found Lewis in the happiest dispositions. Already his mind had entertained the romantic idea; for he had some sins of a grievous nature to expiate, contracted by the cruel massacre of the inhabitants of Vitri in Champagne, and he had a vow to fulfill, which his elder brother, Philip, had made, and had not lived to accomplish.—The letter of Eugenius at once fixed his resolution, and he ordered a great assembly of the nobles and bishops of his realm to meet at Vezelai in Burgundy.

The feast of Easter came, which was the time appointed, and the concourse at Vezelai was numerous and splendid. Bernard of Clairvaux, the oracle of France, had been commanded by his holiness to preach the crusade, and the king had before consulted him as the guide of his conscience, and the soul that was to animate the great undertaking.—There was no church large enough to contain the multitude which thickened every moment: it was therefore proposed that they should move into a neighbouring plain. A scaffold was erected, and Bernard mounted. The king was on one side, and Eleanor, his queen, a little behind on the other. Before him stood a crowd, thick as the fallen leaves in autumn, which stretched over the plain, and seemed to meet the horizon. Bernard turned his face towards the East: a glow of enthusiasm beamed on his countenance; and he raised his eyes and hands towards heaven.—He first read the pope's letter: it held out the pardon of sins to the crusaders,

crusaders, and the protection of the holy see to themselves, to their wives, to their children, and to their property; and it promised the crown of martyrdom to those who should fall by the enemies sword.—This finished, he harangued the multitude: he talked of the dignity of the holy land, and of the profanation, to which soon perhaps it might again be exposed; he recounted the glorious achievements of their ancestors, whose hardyhood had wrested the promised inheritance from the hands of infidels, where many holy penitents had since shed their tears unmolested, and washed out their sins: this, said he, the enemy sees, and is mad with fury. “ But what an occasion, continued he, “ is now offered for the pardon of your sins! Truly, it is an “ invention worthy of the depth of the divine goodness! “ None are excluded. Murderers, thieves, adulterers, all “ are called.—Turn then your swords no more against one “ another: the common enemy presents his breast to you. “ Confess your sins; take up the crosses; and march against “ him. Victory or the palm of martyrdom awaits you in “ yonder regions:” and he pointed to the East.

His words, though uttered with the emphasis of an inspired man, could not be heard at a distance; but his gestures and animated looks were visible. The infection caught the first ranks, and in a moment, like an electric shock, it pervaded the vast assembly. The king rose; he advanced to the preacher, and took from his hand a white cross, which had been sent him from Rome, and fixed it on his right shoulder. He then attempted to speak, but his voice was drowned in the general uproar. The crowd pressed towards the scaffold. Eleanor then took the cross, and  
after

BOOK VII. after her the principal nobility. As the rest came up, they were served with crosses; but so great was the demand, though a large parcel had been prepared, that soon there were no more to distribute. Still the cry for crosses continued, and the press was as violent as ever. Bernard would not lose the precious moment: he tore off his habit, which was white; ript it into crosses; and gave them to the multitude.—Never had such a scene been before exhibited.

As great preparations were necessary, the expedition was deferred to the next year. In the mean time, another meeting was called at Chartres. Here, among the means which were proposed to give success to the undertaking, the command of the army was unanimously offered to Bernard. He refused it, as became him, urging his ill health, and his inability to marshal soldiers and to march at their head. But he undertook another business to which he was more equal: this was, to rouse the emperor and the German nation to engage in the expedition.

He found Conrad at Francfort. Bernard, in secret, opened his commission to him, and as he loved his salvation, he exhorted him, not to lose the favourable moment. The emperor was not moved; he had business which engaged him at home; and he told Bernard, that he had heard Palestine was a great way off, and that he was not now disposed to visit it. The saint withdrew. But he resolved to try his strength on the Germans, and then to renew his attack on Conrad. He had observed, however, that the Germans were a cool and phlegmatic people, whom common impressions little moved, and that other means than those, must be used, which had inspired his own countrymen

men with ardour. He would address them in signs and wonders. BOOK VII.

The account of the miracles, which he is then said to have worked, in the different towns in Germany, as recorded by eye-witnesses, is truly astonishing. I am at a loss what opinion to form; though I cannot persuade myself to believe, that heaven could have so manifestly interfered to promote a scheme, at once so extravagant in itself, and which was to end so disastrously. Bernard, religious, honest, conscientious, as he was, could not possibly have engaged in a settled plan of deception. I would rather think he was himself imposed on; and that these extraordinary facts were really no more than the common effects of a heated imagination, aided by ignorance and enthusiasm. They are not related with all their circumstances, and the relaters were evidently disposed to think them true.

True or false, the effect was one. The Germans could not withstand the impression. They crowded round the saint, though the language he spoke was unknown to them, and often so impetuously, that his own and the lives of his followers were sometimes in danger, while he was giving speech to the dumb, and hearing to the deaf. Every where they enrolled themselves in the sacred service.—Again he met the emperor at Spire. Bernard addressed him in a public sermon, and in private he held before him the glory of the enterprise, and the spiritual advantages of a penance, so easy and so honourable. Conrad had heard of the wonders he had worked before his people, and he saw how the torrent ran; he therefore promised that, he would lay the matter before his council, and that the next day he should know.

BOOK VII. know the result.—The holy man was too wise to wait for the next day, or the cool deliberations of its council. While the emperor was at mass, he appeared unasked in the pulpit, and harangued the assembly: then turning to Conrad, he said: “ Soon shall you also be called before the dread  
“ tribunal of your judge: and what answer will you make,  
“ you who now ungratefully refuse to move a step in his  
“ service, when an account shall be demanded of the ter-  
“ ritories, of the wealth, of the crown, of the armies, of  
“ the strength of body and courage of mind, which he has  
“ bestowed upon you?”—The emperor was struck, and interrupting the preacher, he exclaimed: “ I acknowledge  
“ the goodness of God, and will be ungrateful no longer:  
“ I now see what is the will of heaven.”—The people shouted, and Conrad advancing took a cross from the hand of Bernard: they then went together to the altar, on which lay a standard, which the saint blessed, and delivered to the emperor.—At the same time Frederick Barbarossa his nephew, then duke of Suabia, and nobles innumerable, pinned the cross to their shoulders.

The time fixed for the departure of the armies was come, and the king of France once more met his people at Estampes. They deliberated on the route which should be taken. Many were disposed to go by sea, as the experience of the first crusade had taught them, that the fair promises of the Greeks were not to be relied on; and in this opinion they were joined by the ambassadors from Roger, king of Sicily, who, in the name of their master, offered ships and all necessary provisions. The advice, however, was overruled. They knew little of sailing, and would not expose themselves

themselves to the uncertain element. Besides, it was said, at the view of an army, so numerous and so splendid, the pusillanimous Greeks would only tremble. It was therefore resolved to pursue the road which Geoffrey of Bouillon had taken, as far as Constantinople. Of this the emperor was acquainted, who adopted the same plan.

In the assembly of Estampes, Suger of St. Denys was chosen regent of the kingdom, during the absence of the monarch, with the general approbation of all orders of the state. This was the highest compliment which could be paid to the exalted abilities of this excellent man, and the wisdom of his administration fully justified the choice. At any other time, indeed, the step would have been opposed; it would have roused the ambition and the jealousy of those, who, from birth or station, might have pretended to the important charge: at present, the great passions of the nation were engaged in another pursuit.

The German army was first in motion. It consisted of more than a hundred thousand fighting men, and Conrad was at their head. They marched through Hungary, Bulgaria, and Thrace. As they approached Constantinople, it appeared how little the Greeks were disposed to be their friends.—Manuel Comnenus, grandson to Alexius, who had seen the first crusade, was emperor of the East. He was a prince, as his historians relate, of a very various character; but his good qualities certainly preponderated, as the Latins themselves allow he was not without merit. They charge him, indeed, with perfidy, and with the basest treachery in their regard, while perhaps he was only prudent and politic, as became a wise prince. A hundred

BOOK VII. thousand Germans were under the walls of his capital, brave, enterprising, and licentious, and they were soon to be joined by as many French! He knew they had not forgotten, what they called the ill treatment of his grandfather; and besides, at the very time, Roger of Sicily, their friend and ally, was in open war with him, desolating his coasts, and plundering his subjects.—However, he received the emperor, whose brother-in-law he was, with much civility: he praised his design, his piety, and his courage; but he pressed him much to pursue his journey, as the weather was favourable, and as the transports were in readiness to convey his army into Asia.—In the mean while, he acquainted the infidels of the formidable preparations, which threatened their dominions, and gave them what other information might be most necessary.—Conrad with all his forces crossed the straits.

While the Imperial army was advancing towards Constantinople, Lewis began his march. The Roman pontiff had just arrived in France, whom he had consulted on the general business of the crusade. Together they had visited the relics of St. Denys, where the king took from the altar the sacred banner, called Oriflamme, and his holiness then gave him his benediction, putting, at the same time, on his shoulders the proper badge of a pilgrim.—The army of France was in nothing inferior to that of the empire; and its march was prosperous and unmolested, till they entered the Grecian territories. They advanced, however, and came within sight of Constantinople, about the beginning of October, in 1147.

Notwithstanding



Notwithstanding the ambushes, the groundless complaints, and the open attacks, by which his army had been daily irritated, Lewis proposed an interview with the emperor, and obtained it. They met at the Imperial palace in Constantinople, and if looks and gestures might be relied on, never was meeting more sincere. They were both about the age of twenty-five, both elegant, both handsome, both affable, and were both magnificently appareled, one as a warrior, the other in his Imperial robes. Manuel displayed before the king the riches of his palace, and the magnificence of his capital. He led him into the temple of St. Sophia; he ravished his ears with music, and his taste with the delicacies of the East. In this he could gratify his own vanity; he then hinted, as the army had recovered from the fatigue of their march, that it would be proper they should pursue their journey.—Soon after it was rumoured that Conrad had gained a great victory, and that the East was submitting to his arms.

Lewis called a council of war.—It was the general opinion, that no more time should be lost. The Germans, they said, are reaping a full harvest of glory, and with it all the booty of conquered kingdoms. The king, however, hesitated: a large detachment from his army was not yet come up, and he had promised to wait their arrival. Still the cry was, that they should cross the Hellespont. When Geoffrey, bishop of Langres, a penetrating and shrewd man, whom the artifices of the Greeks had not imposed on, and who, in the report now circulated, saw their crafty design, rose in the assembly, and said: “ Before we cross the Hellespont, my  
“ friends, let us be masters of Constantinople. Without

BOOK VII. " this, all our attempts will be successful, and this army  
" will perish. We must depend on the Greeks for provi-  
" sions, and we must depend on their guides in a hostile  
" and impracticable country. The scheme I propose to you  
" is neither chimerical nor difficult: I have myself examined  
" the walls of the city, which are weak and defenceless:  
" or, if you will, we may seize on the aqueducts, which to  
" them are the very sources of existence. You have, be-  
" sides, a third option: meet them in the plain, and let  
" those schismatics, debauched and enervated as they are,  
" feel what it is to contend with men and with true be-  
" lievers."

Had the sound advice been followed, it would have been well for this devoted army; but many difficulties were raised, and some said that, having made a vow to bear their arms against the infidels, they were no longer at liberty to change their destination.—They resolved to proceed; and, in a few days, the whole army was landed in Asia.

Conrad, in the mean time, was advancing to the awful period of destruction. Whatever obstacles the malevolence of the Greeks could lay before him, them he hourly experienced. They shut their gates, they demanded an exorbitant price for bad provisions, and they cut off the straggling soldiers. But now the difficulties thickened round him. He had left Nicomedia behind him, and was in the enemy's country. His guides, on whom he was obliged to rely, led him forward, with assurances that, in a few days, they should see before them the wide and fertile plains of Lycania. The few days passed. The soldiers were worn down with fatigue, provisions failed them, the country grew more impracticable,

impracticable, and nothing met their eyes but mountains and never-ending forests, when news was brought, that the guides had gone off in the night-time, and that the sultan of Iconium with all his forces was coming down upon them. BOOK VII.

The barbarous cries of the enemy were soon heard in the woods. Conrad rode through the ranks of his army, and strove to raise their drooping hearts. They formed into order, as well as the nature of the country would allow, and prepared to meet the coming storm. In a moment, the light-armed Saracens assailed them on all sides; they discharged their arrows, with a sure and unerring arm, and suddenly wheeling round, broke their ranks, and disappeared. But again they turned to the charge. In vain did the brave Germans strive to come into action. Their armour was cumbrous and unweildy, and their horses, famished and broken down, had no chance with the winged cavalry of the enemy. They fell by thousands. Conrad seeing all was lost, attempted to rally his men, and to retreat. He had been wounded by two arrows. It was not possible to effect it. No orders could be given, nor was his voice heard. The barbarians came on in greater numbers. He saw his stoutest men were fallen. In this distress, he fled, and was followed by a few who had not quitted his person. Among these was Frederic Barbarossa. His baggage was left to be plundered; and the enemy completed their work by a general slaughter of what remained on the field. It is said that, before night, not a tenth part of the hundred thousand men who had seen the sun rise, survived the dreadful butchery; and these were dispersed or wounded.

—The

BOOK VII. —The emperor, however, escaped, and got safe to Nicea, at which place the army of France had just arrived.

It was a melancholy interview.—Here they halted for some days, that the wretched remains of the Imperial army might be collected, and to settle the necessary order of the march. Lewis, young and impetuous, proposed to take the route which had been so fatal to Conrad; but he at last listened to more prudent counsels. They proceeded, therefore, through Lydia, bearing towards the sea, and arrived, without molestation, at Ephesus. Here the emperor left them, and embarked for Constantinople.—In a valley, near Ephesus, the army encamped, and celebrated, in martial form, the feast of Christmas. They then continued their march towards Laodicea, and in a few days, arrived on the banks of the winding Meander.

This river, to which poetry has annexed so many pleasing ideas, was then swollen by the rains, and the torrents of melted snow which poured down from the mountains. It was besides, at all times, deep, and its banks were steep and rugged. Here the enemy, whose spies had watched the progress of the christian army, divided into two bodies, waited their approach. They covered the hills on both sides the river. Lewis assembled his generals: they saw the danger which threatened, but unless they passed the river, it was evident, they must perish by famine. The river was found unfordable. For one whole day they marched up its bank, at every step galled by the arrows of the enemy. On the second, they discovered a ford, but the opposite landing was hardly practicable: however, they resolved to attempt it. The king ordered the van to advance, and himself took

took charge of the rear. They advanced. At the same instant, the cloud broke from the hills, and the enemy, like a torrent, descended on both sides: their cries were terrible, and their bows were bent. The rear faced about: while the van, led on by heroes, drew their swords, and raising their bucklers over their heads, plunged into the stream. They passed it, and gained the steep ascent. The enemy, whose weapons had fallen without effect, retired in dismay, and the christians, forming as they came up, advanced into the plain.—Lewis, in the mean time, sword in hand, had attacked the Saracens, who imprudently bore down upon him, and having slaughtered and dispersed them, he returned triumphant to the river, and passed it unmolested. —A general attack was now made on the camp of the enemy, which they forced, and found it full of riches, and well furnished with provisions.—It is remarkable, that only one man, Milo de Nogent, was lost on this occasion. This surely was miraculous; and historians relate that a warrior, in silver armour, headed the French through the river, and first assailed the enemy!

The troops were ready to march the next morning, and they left the Meander, proud in the superiority of their strength, and prepared for greater dangers. They arrived at Laodicea.—Not far from this place, on the road to Pisidia, through which they meant to pass, lay a ridge of mountains, rugged and of very difficult ascent, and behind them was a wide and fertile plain. Lewis ordered the vanguard to take possession of the heights, and there to halt, till the rear and baggage should have reached the summit. They ascended with alacrity; but perceiving from the top  
of

BOOK VII. of the mountain that the sun was still high, and allured by the beauties of the plain below, they deliberated on the propriety of advancing, and resolved to proceed slowly onwards.

The infidels no sooner perceived the imprudent step, than with wonderful alertness they availed themselves of it, and hastening forward on the ridge of the hills, were ready to take possession of the ground, almost as soon as the van began to descend towards the plain. The rear, in the mean time, secure and confident, slowly ascended the rugged eminence. Very soon they were roused by the well-known cry, and looking up they discovered the barbarous host, which occupied every defile, and hung upon the mountain. There was no time for reflection. A shower of arrows brought instant death, while the nearer ranks advanced, and drew the cimeter. The brave Frenchmen received the sudden shock; but the first lines being slaughtered, or overwhelmed by numbers, the next fell back, and a scene of the most dreadful confusion ensued. All that the most determined valour could do, was still attempted: the rear pressed forward, but it was only to certain destruction; the baggage-waggons obstructed their passage, and where they found an outlet, it was to meet the arrows and the swords of the enemy. In the confusion, however, many escaped, and some had the good fortune to join their friends, who already had fixed their tents in the plain.—Night fell.

The king till this moment, with a few brave fellows by his side, had withstood the dreadful conflict; when darkness closed round him, and he found himself alone. In the heat of the engagement, he had had the presence of mind to  
order

order his secretary, Odon de Deuil, a monk, to get round to the plain, and to inform the van of the situation of his army. He therefore hoped that assistance might soon be at hand. The wild shrieks of the vaunting enemy, the wailings of the wounded, and the dying groans of men and horses, from all sides pierced his ears. Armed and bleeding he climbed up a tree, and from thence let himself down on the point of a rock, which the little light that remained discovered to him. But the same light soon betrayed him to a party of the enemy. They attacked him: but his armour was proof against their arrows, and his sword soon damped the courage of those who dared to come within its reach. They knew him not to be the king, and they left him.—After some time, he again heard the tread of feet approaching towards him; but soon he perceived they were friends: he made himself known, and coming down from the rock, mounted a horse, which belonged to the party. Heaven still protected him. A while they wandered about, uncertain which way to turn, and hemmed in by danger. A path presented itself, which they followed, and as day began to break, to their joy they discovered the plain beneath them, and soon after met a detachment of the army, which was coming to their assistance. He entered the camp.

This at least was a fortunate event. But how was all their gladness saddened, when the day discovered the extent of their losses! Very few joined the camp, and soon was it evident, that all who were brave or distinguished had perished or been made prisoners. Nor did the evil stop here: their baggage was taken, their provisions destroyed, and their guides were dispersed. The enemy besides, had

BOOK VII. recovered heart from the victory, and they might expect fresh encounters and an increase of difficulties. The proud conquerors were seen hovering on the hills.

A council of war was summoned. The king proposed, as the danger which threatened was imminent and common, that no attention should be longer paid to rank or office, but that he should be chosen to the command of the army, whom experience and martial conduct had best fitted to the important charge. "I myself, said he, will set the first example of obedience: whatever post be allotted me, I will discharge it to the best of my abilities."—The proposition was received with applause, and they chose for their general one Gilbert, a soldier of fortune, whose knowledge of the military art was in great estimation. The pressing danger gave unanimity to their votes. Gilbert accepted the command. He then chose his subaltern generals; divided the army into three bodies; and allotted to each general his post. The king was stationed in the centre.—They began their march towards Pamphylia.

On the road lay two swampy rivulets. The enemy appeared in full force, prepared to dispute the passage. Gilbert ordered some light squadrons to advance: they charged with fury. The Saracens were thrown into disorder: and the christians passed the first rivulet. A general engagement then ensued, in which the infidels were defeated, and a great slaughter made.—From this time they pursued their march without molestation, but in great want of provisions, and arrived at Attalia, a town on the Mediterranean sea. Of such importance was discipline, and a due subordination to command.



At this place, the malevolence of the Greeks was more glaring than ever. They were not moved by the recital of the dangers, to which the army had been exposed, nor by the sufferings they had undergone, nor by the slaughter of their friends. They strove to aggravate their misfortunes by cruelty, and to add to their distresses, by exactions the most oppressive: they even refused them the common necessities of life.—Lewis, with his generals, debated the arduous business. The army was reduced more than one half; they were without horses; the soldiers were spent with fatigue; the remaining journey to Antioch would require at least forty days; hosts of enemies beset the whole route: but by sea, three days might land them on a friendly shore. There was no room, it seemed, for hesitation. They applied to the Greeks for transports, who readily engaged to supply them; but after five weeks, very few were ready, and those of the smallest construction.

The army would submit no longer to this irritating usage. They sent to the king, to request, that he and his nobles would make use of the vessels which were ready, and that he would permit them to pursue their march by land, and join him at Antioch. They added, they would rather die by the sword of the enemy, than perish ignobly by famine; that they wished him a prosperous voyage; that as to themselves, providence, they trusted, would be their guide; and that, if they must fall, it should be like men and soldiers of Christ.

The prince was much affected. He referred the matter to his council, who agreed that he should accept the proposals of the army. Before he left them, however, he neglected

BOOK VII. no measure which prudence and his own benevolent heart could suggest, for their present relief, and future safety. He gave them two generals, prudent and experienced officers; he distributed large sums of money among the foldiers; he obtained guides for them from the governor of Attalia, and the promise of an escort, which was to conduct them as far as Tarsus in Cilicia; and he purchased all the horses, he could procure, for the officers, and to convey the baggage. Moreover, he obtained leave for the sick and wounded to be lodged in the city, till they should be in a condition to travel; and with his own eyes he saw them properly distributed. After this he sailed, and landed in the neighbourhood of Antioch, through a perilous sea, and after three weeks voyage.

The army, soon after the departure of the king, began their march. But hardly had they lost sight of the walls of Attalia, when they were met by the enemy, flushed with new courage, and bold from numbers. The christians withstood their onset, and repulsed them: but they were not in a condition to pursue the flying enemy.—The guides and escort now waited on the generals to inform them, that they could proceed no further; that the season was too far advanced; and that the infidels, they saw, were too powerful to be resisted by such inferior troops. No intreaties could prevail. They sent a messenger to the governor; but all they could obtain was, that they might return, and encamp under the walls, till an occasion offered for transporting them elsewhere. Even here they were not safe: the Saracens daily annoyed them, and the citizens refused them common protection. They died by thousands.

Between

Betwixt three and four thousand resolute men, unable any longer to bear such treatment, determined once more to attempt the journey. The infidels allowed them, for some days, to proceed unmolested. They came to a broad and rapid river; and here the enemy appeared. To pass it was impossible, and to retreat was dangerous. They debated for a moment, and in that moment they were surrounded. The general of the Saracens advanced, and offered them peace and the friendship of his people, if they would renounce their religion and join his standard; otherwise they must submit to slavery.—The brave men were shocked at the alternative; but as the word *slavery* makes an impression we are the least able to resist, they chose the former, and bowed their heads to the turban.—What remained of the army at Attalia we hear no more of.

Raymond, uncle to the queen, as I have said, was prince of Antioch. When he heard that Lewis was landed in his territories, he marched out, in great pomp, to meet him, and conducted him to the city. He was received with all the honours due to his person; and the endearing caresses of Raymond and his nobles seemed, for a moment, to still the troubles of his agitated mind. He had a distressful tale to tell, of perfidious friends, of potent enemies, of perilous adventures, and of routed armies. Raymond had flattered himself, that he should see a triumphant conqueror, who would bring new glory to Antioch, who would strengthen his present territories, and help to extend them by his arms.

Lewis, indeed, had lost his army; but in a short time he had the comfort to see himself surrounded by a brilliant  
and

BOOK VII. and martial train of noblemen and knights, part of whom had accompanied him and others had since joined his standard. These the prince of Antioch lavishly courted, and he proposed to the king to engage in some splendid undertaking, wherein might be displayed the valour of his brave Frenchmen, and the christian cause be promoted. The conquest of Aleppo, he said, where resided a proud sultan, would be a glorious achievement. This proposal he urged with the most flattering expressions: he accompanied them with presents; and the queen joined her efforts to those of her uncle. Lewis could not be prevailed on. He had a vow, he said, solemnly made to heaven, which could only be discharged at Jerusalem, and thither he must go. But there was another circumstance very heavy on his heart, which rendered his stay at Antioch daily more painful. This he could not mention.

His queen, the elegant, the airy, the sprightly Eleanor, had accompanied the army in all its marches. She had figured in the gay court of Constantinople, had seen the triumphant passage of the Meander, and fortunately was encamped in the plain, during the disastrous defeat on the mountains. The fair pilgrim, it seems, had found but little relish in the perils and toils of war. The king had a thousand cares to engage his attention; and probably she had not found him more agreeable under the helmet and in the dusty plains of Asia, than she had thought him in his own palace, with his cropt hair and shaven chin. By the advice of Peter Lombard, bishop of Paris, who assured him that God detested long hair, he had cut off the profane ornaments. Eleanor rallied him for it; when he observed  
that,

that, pleasantry on such serious subjects was very ill placed.. BOOK VII.

“ I was told, replied she, that I was to marry a prince;  
“ but your Majesty, I find, is a monk.” In matrimony, contempt and hatred are very nearly allied.—During the march, it does not appear, that she had given the king any cause for complaint: but at Antioch, when she began to breathe, when she looked back on what she had suffered, and when gaiety and pleasure courted her smiles in their most alluring forms, Eleanor could not withstand their impression: she thought, she might justly take some indulgence for past discomforts, and make up for a year of *ennui*.—The prince, her uncle, was her principal favourite, and a young Turk, it is said, named Saladin, beautiful and lovely as the son of Myrrha.—Eleanor was married in her fifteenth year, and was now about the age of twenty-four.

The king, naturally benevolent, mild, and religious, felt more poignantly this ungrateful treatment, which, he did not think, he had deserved. Immediately he gave orders to his little army to march, and he signified to the queen that he expected she would be ready to accompany him. This she did not wish to do; and the prince of Antioch, in concert with her, even dared publicly to insult his majesty, hoping that, in irritation of mind, he might retire precipitately, and be satisfied to visit Jerusalem alone. Lewis took the advice of his friends, who were of opinion that the queen should, by no means, be left behind, to dishonour herself and disgrace the majesty of her husband.—The nobility with their men lay encamped without the walls. It was agreed that, the next night, one of the gates should be kept open. The king compelled Eleanor, who  
was

BOOK VII. was not prepared for the adventure, to accompany him, and all together they took the road towards Jerusalem.—Here he found the emperor Conrad, who, having wintered at Constantinople, was first arrived, and waited his coming.

Jerusalem received him with every mark of distinction. Its young king Baldwin, and his mother Melisenda, were delighted: they had apprehended, with some reason, that the intriguing and selfish spirit of Raymond might have detained him at Antioch.

The ceremony of visiting the holy places was first to be discharged. This the king, with all his followers, in solemn pomp, performed, habited like pilgrims, and accompanied by the prince of Jerusalem and his court.—Some expedition, they then thought, should be undertaken against the infidels, and a grand assembly was ordered to meet at Ptolemais. The day was fixed.

Palestine had not yet seen so gorgeous a show. The emperor came with his attendant bishops, and the cardinal legate, with Henry duke of Austria, his brother, Frederick duke of Suabia, his nephew, with many other powerful lords and gentlemen.—Lewis was accompanied by an equal number of bishops, and by a cardinal legate, by Robert count of Dreux, his brother, by Henry of Champagne, his son-in-law, by Thierry count of Flanders, and many other distinguished noblemen.—Baldwin of Jerusalem, and his mother, were not less splendidly attended.

It was debated, what was most proper to be done for the welfare of the christian republic in Asia. Various measures were proposed: but the siege of Damascus was finally determined. The conquest of this place, one of the most considerable

considerable in Syria, would at once give glory to their arms, and be generally beneficial; for from hence the Saracens made daily incursions into the christian territories.—Orders were given for the troops to march. They were divided into three corps, commanded by their respective monarchs. The young king of Jerufalem took the post of danger: he wished to signalise his prowess before his royal visitors, and he led on to the attack.

It is not my intention to detail the particulars of this memorable siege. The christians performed feats of wonder; nor were they less valiantly opposed. But when it seemed that the place must soon surrender; whether by some strange fatality, or secret treason, or jealousy among the commanders, the besiegers were drawn off from that side of the walls which could resist no longer, and were directed to make a fresh attack on the opposite quarter.—Here nothing could succeed. They were exposed to the darts of the enemy; the walls were strong; the springs dried up; and no forage could be found for the horses. In this extremity, the European princes resolved to raise the siege: they saw they were betrayed, or that heaven, whose battles they wished to fight, was not disposed to favour their romantic efforts.

The emperor soon after returned to Germany.—Lewis remained in Palèstine till the following spring, when he embarked for Calabria, visited Rome, and arrived in his own kingdom, in 1149, after an absence of two years, worn down by anxiety, and only rich in the reputation of having engaged in a wild project, which could not have ended more disastrously.—From this time, the condition of the

BOOK VII. Oriental christians became daily worse. The infidels, seeing the successful efforts of numerous armies, laughed at the vain attempt; and on a nearer view, began to despise those mighty warriors, the bare mention of whose names had once filled them with terror.

Thus have I described the principal events up to the year 1160, and exhibited the general features of the period, in church and state. Little else remains; only as the reader has seen much of Bernard, of Peter the venerable, and of Suger, he may wish to know how long they survived the transactions I have related. They did not long survive.

Death and  
character of  
Suger.

Suger, abbot of St. Denys, and minister of state, died in 1152, a little more than two years after the return of his master from the holy land. He had strenuously opposed that mad expedition; but what chance had cool reason and political discernment, against the enthusiasm and wonder-working powers of his friend and countryman, the abbot of Clairvaux? The kingdom he administered with prudence, firmness, and integrity. Great as were the foreign expences, his master was always supplied with money, and the subject at home was not oppressed. By every argument, he strove to avert the fatal divorce betwixt Lewis and his queen; and as long as he lived, it was not accomplished. He saw the evils that probably must fall on his country, by permitting so large a territory, as was Eleanor's dowry, to be again severed from the royal domain: but he could not see that, in the first six weeks, she would marry Henry of England. Suger was the Sully of France in the twelfth century.

\* I have followed, in this account of the crusade, Fleury, Daniel, and Maimbourg, who had consulted the best sources.

As.



As abbot, his life was exemplary, and his manners irreproachable. In the beginning of his administration, having found his monastery undisciplined and enervated, he was himself, then unused to conventual regularity, carried down the stream: he was prodigal in his expences, sumptuous in his table, and in his dress and attendants gay and splendid. In five years the gaudy scene was over. He reformed his abbey; and was himself the first to set the example of that rigid discipline and severe morality, which alone give perfection to the monastic institute. Suger had formed a plan of quitting every civil employment, and was just then retiring to St. Denys, when the unanimous voice of the people called him to the regency of the state.

He was of low extraction. His figure wanted comeliness, and his countenance dignity: but his mental qualities were of a superior cast. His understanding was comprehensive, his judgment sound, his memory prodigious, and his penetration intuitive. When he spoke, there was grace in his manner, and fluency in his expression; nor did any subject seem to him either new or embarrassing. These qualities were still heightened by a modesty without affectation, and a gravity without sternness. He was mild, beneficent, disinterested, and friendly. The king loved him as his parent; the nobility respected his abilities; and the people adored his virtues. He died in his seventieth year. The king attended his funeral, and wept over his bier. He has been called the father of his country<sup>2</sup>.

The year following, in 1153, died also Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux.—I have related enough of his life, to convince

Death and  
character of  
Bernard.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel vol. iii.

BOOK VII.

the reader that he was truly an extraordinary man. Thus does an eminent writer, well qualified to appreciate merit, speak of him<sup>a</sup>. Bernard, says he, I regard as the prodigy of his age.—Heaven, it seemed, had, with pleasure, assembled in him alone, all the endowments of nature and grace. He was descended from noble and virtuous parents. In his person he was handsome, and his mind was perfect. Sprightly and penetrating, he could discern with accuracy, and could judge with confidence. His heart was generous, his sentiments elevated, his resolution unshaken, and his will ever upright and ever constant.—Nor had art neglected to improve the work of nature. His education was the best which the age could give: early he had been instructed in religion, and in the human sciences. With much reflection he daily studied the word of God, and he read the holy fathers. In the pulpit he was animated and nervous; but his language was too flowery, though adapted to the taste of his hearers. The same defect pervades his writings.—We must not forget that Bernard was a faint; for his humility was profound, his zeal ardent, his charity unbounded, and the gift of miracles marked him for the favourite of heaven.—The portrait, perhaps, is too highly coloured.

But if the historian may be permitted to break through that dazzling glare, which miracles and his inspired air threw round him, he will discover some shades in the character of Bernard; and where have we seen humanity without them? They help to form its beauty.—He was austere, meddling, acrimonious, and zealous over much.—His austerity began with himself, and extended to others: when  
not

<sup>a</sup> Fleury disc. 8

not called on, he interfered in the concerns of all men: he was bitter, and even abusive, against those he esteemed the enemies of truth: and we have beheld his zeal, precipitate and inflexible, till it had involved two kingdoms in the most disastrous undertaking. When he was blamed as the author of these misfortunes, his reply was; that the judgments of heaven were inscrutable, and that the sins of the crusaders had brought ruin on their arms. But could he think, when, in the plain of Vezelai, he enlisted the banditti of France, that their hearts were converted; or that the hundred thousand Germans, whom the sight of his miracles compelled to arms, would not be guilty of a hundred thousand excesses? The conduct of the first crusaders had clearly said, what was to be expected from such expeditions.

His ascendancy over the minds of men, and his sway in the councils of Europe were astonishing. From the retirement of his cell, in the vale of Clairvaux, abstracted from the world, and conversing with heaven, he was called to the courts of princes, to decide their quarrels, or to aid them with his advice. Nor could it be said, that he was there displaced or out of character: his own personal consideration gave him a respect above titles, and an influence which neither years, nor abilities, nor office could bestow. —At Rome, of whose prerogative he was too lavish an admirer, Bernard was the soul of design, and the spring of action. Never did the holy see possess a truer friend. Over Eugenius, who had been his disciple, he retained an authority, which, perhaps, was more honourable to the scholar, than the master. If Suger was less a saint than Bernard, the former, I think, had a sounder judgment, was a better politician,

BOOK VII. politician, a more experienced minister, and, perhaps, a more useful citizen.—The abbot of Clairvaux died in his sixty-third year, having founded and annexed to his order, seventy-two monasteries in different parts of Europe. “The church, concludes Fleury, honours his memory on the day of his death; and the learning, the zeal, the piety, which his writings display, have justly given him a place, though the last, among the fathers of the church.”

Death of  
Peter the  
venerable.

Within three years from this time, in 1156, expired the other luminary of France, Peter the venerable.—Already I have said so much of this good man, and with a view of depicting his character, that more cannot be necessary. For thirty-five years he governed his order with singular prudence, which then consisted of more than three hundred houses, and two thousand dependent convents. The appellation of *venerable* which he acquired, was not the consequence of years; for he was chosen abbot in his twenty-eighth year, and died in his sixty-third; but it was due to his grave deportment, to his exemplary life, and to his great erudition. He entered little into political business, only as far as the interest of Cluni was concerned. His abilities were less brilliant than those of St. Bernard, his friend and his admirer; but his sense was sound, and his judgment unbiaſſed. Nature and her laws were not obedient to his voice, for I do not find that he worked any miracles; but his dispositions were mild, his heart benevolent, and his hand was ever open to relieve the distressed.—He wrote against the Jews, and he engaged one Robert, an Englishman, archdeacon of Pampeluna in Spain, well versed in the Arabic language, to translate the Koran of Mahomet into

into Latin. He rewarded the translator munificently, and himself undertook to refute the absurd rhapsody.—Peter Maurice, I have before observed, was the last celebrated man of his order, and with him set the fun of Cluni<sup>b</sup>. BOOK VII.

Hardly, I think, can it be said with propriety that an age is dark, which possessed three such men as I have now described. Nor did they stand alone. Others there were in Italy, Germany, and England, not equally eminent; but whose abilities were great, whose learning was not contemptible, and whose virtues were exemplary. These I would with pleasure exhibit, were not the ground already too thickly set with objects.—It is often the practice of modern writers to describe unfavourably the character of passed times, either because to blame is more congenial with their humour than to give praise; or because they are led by the prejudices of others, which they have not taken care to shake off; or because to copy some favourite author is much less laborious than to study the originals; or because they may fancy, that themselves and the age they live in, will appear more resplendent, in proportion to the shades which are thrown on the more distant objects. At all events, the twilight of the twelfth century (for such at least it may be called) was necessary to prepare the rising of that auspicious day, whose brilliant splendour now surrounds us. With our posterity, perhaps, it will be made a question, whether as yet we have passed its dawn.

In the peaceful cloisters of the Paraclet, where we had left Heloisa, there she still was after a period of twenty years. She had not engaged in its turbulent scenes: but from

<sup>b</sup> Fleury vol. xiv. xv.

BOOK VII. from her cell she might have contemplated their progress, and bewailed their unfortunate exit. The death of Peter the venerable would be a real loss.—It may be remembered that, in her correspondence with Abeillard on the origin and duties of the monastic institute, she had strongly urged the propriety of mitigating its severity in favour of women. Not then so fervent, or less warmed by that enviable enthusiasm which can find delight in pain and self-denials, she thought it reasonable to plead for every innocent indulgence: was not the path of life sufficiently beset with thorns? And was the traveller with his own hands to add to their number? In process of time, as circumstances altered, or as the cares of office, perhaps, soured her mind, or as it hardened by age, Heloisa adopted a more rigid plan, the constitutions of which she herself framed, and introduced into the rule of the Paraclet. The substance of these constitutions I will give to the reader: he may have heard much of nuns, and not know in what practices their lives are spent.

Having observed that all religious instruction must take its origin from Christ, who practised the virtues of poverty, of humility, and of obedience, she proceeds. I.—“ We strive, as far as in us lies, to imitate the lives of the first christians, by having all things in common. What is given to us, that we divide as far as it will go. If there be not enough for all, they are first served who want it most.”

II.—“ Our dress is ordinary and simple, made of the coarsest wool and flax.—But in this, as in our beds, if sometimes we have not all that may seem necessary, let it be remembered, that we have renounced the world and its conveniences.”

III.—“ We

III.—“ We eat the bread that is laid before us, sometimes wheaten, and sometimes made of other grain. In the refectory our common fare is legumes, or such roots as the garden gives us. Milk, eggs, and cheese are rarely served; and fish only when the kindness of our neighbours supplies us. Our wine is mixed with water. —At supper only salad or fruit is allowed us; and when these fail, we bear it without murmuring.”

IV.—“ Only the abbesses and prioresses have any right to command. Without their permission no one can presume to go out of the enclosure, or to speak, or to give, or to receive, the smallest trifle.”

V.—“ Would our strength permit us, we should till our lands, and live by labour. But we cannot. We therefore call in the aid of lay-brothers and lay-sisters.—Any alms, which the piety of the faithful offers, we do not refuse.”

VI.—“ We rise before break of day, and proceed to the church to *matins*.—After this, according to the season of the year, either we retire, for a short time, to our beds, or we meet in the chapter-house, to read or work.—When the bell rings, we again go to church, where *prime* is said, and after that the *morning-mass*.—Again we assemble in the chapter-house to confess publicly our faults, and to receive correction. Here, on solemn feasts, a sermon is preached.—After chapter, if there be time, we read till *terce* or nine o'clock.—Then follow *high-mass* and *sext*, after which we read or work till *none* or three o'clock.—At three we take our meal, silent and recollected.—This finished, we return, giving thanks to God,

BOOK VII. “to the church, and from thence to the chapter-house,  
 “where one of the nuns, whose duty it is, makes a dis-  
 “course to the assembly.—If there be time, we then remain  
 “in the cloisters till the hour of *vespers*. These are always  
 “sung.—After *vespers* we return to the cloisters, where,  
 “in silence and meditation, we wait the hour of *collation*  
 “or supper.—After supper, *complin* is sung in the church,  
 “and we remain in prayer, till a sign is given, at which  
 “all rise from their knees; and then sprinkled with holy  
 “water by the superior, they proceed in procession through  
 “the cloisters to the dormitory, where each one turns to  
 “her bed, and blessing God, retires to rest.”

Thus lived Heloisa and her nuns; and with some accidental variety, the same continues to be the rule of most orders of religious women. It is severe and uninviting; but the mind habitually forms to any thing. The fortunate circumstance is, that every moment of the day has its allotted duty: there is no time for idle speculation, and consequently no time for the ingress of those ideas, from which ennui, uneasiness, and misery spring. Their days flow uniformly on, but rapidly from uniformity; the stream is not ruffled, for their desires are composed, and their affections even; and they meet their last hour with more than philosophic fortitude:

To sounds of heav'nly harps they die away,  
 And melt in visions of eternal day.

While the abbess had been laudably engaged in new-moulding the internal government of her convent, she had  
 not



not neglected its more worldly concerns. I before mentioned BOOK VII the bulls she had obtained from Rome to confirm to the Paraclet such donations as had been made to it. To these afterwards some very considerable additions were made, all which received the same solemn sanction. I find a bull of Eugenius, which specifically mentions every acre of land and every tenement, belonging to the abbey in 1147, one of Anastasius, and three of Adrian. The latter seems particularly well-affected to the Paraclet; he speaks in high terms of the virtuous lives of Heloisa and her sisters; he grants them the petition they had made for leave to bury within the precincts of the convent the bodies of their benefactors; and he denounces the indignation of God and of the holy apostles against all those, who shall dare to infringe or to oppose the letter of his mandate<sup>d</sup>.—Nothing more was necessary to perfect this establishment, and to give it a stability which, in the ordinary course of human events, might last for ages.

It was now the year eleven hundred and sixty-three, and Heloisa had entered into her sixty-third year.—She fell sick. Her death.—History tells us not what her disorder was, nor does it relate the circumstances of her death. A more modern author only says that, when she saw her end approaching, she turned to her sisters, who stood weeping round her; exhorted them to submission and to the practice of every christian virtue; and then ordered that her body should be laid in the tomb by the side of Abeillard<sup>e</sup>. Soon after she expired. It was on a Sunday, and on the seventeenth of May.

<sup>d</sup> Op. Abeil. p. 353.    <sup>e</sup> Not. Quercet. p. 1195. Vie d'Abeil. p. 321.

BOOK VII. Her obsequies were honoured by the most splendid attendance of the nobility and clergy of the province: a solemn service was performed for the repose of her soul; and her dying request was faithfully executed. They saw the tomb of Abeillard opened, which had been shut for twenty years, and in it were laid the cold remains of the once lively, learned, religious, and benevolent Heloisa.

I will not attempt to delineate her character, as it could only be a repetition of what, perhaps, I have already too much repeated.—On her monument were engraved four lines, barbarous and bad indeed!

Hoc tumulo abbatissa jacet prudens Heloissa.  
 Paraclitum statuit, cum Paraclito requiescit.  
 Gaudia sanctorum sua sunt super alta polorum;  
 Nos meritis precibusque suis exaltet ab imis.

They will not bear to be translated.—To commemorate the learned abilities of Heloisa, it is said that, for many years after her death, the nuns of the Paraclet, at the feast of Whitsuntide, performed the service of the day in Greek<sup>f</sup>. The practice only ceased, when the knowledge of the language was lost amongst them.

But in the course of six hundred years, in the different changes, which the repair of buildings and other events have introduced, care has been taken not to separate their dust. In 1497 the tomb was moved, and again in 1630, when the bones of the lovers, if so they may be called, were found entire. They were distinguished by their size.

<sup>f</sup> Vie d'Abeil. p. 328.

The abbey of the Paraclet seems ever to have retained a great respect for the memory of their illustrious founders; though a traveller, who was there, not many years ago, says that the community knew little of the affecting part of their story<sup>s</sup>.—The late abbess, of the house of Rochefoucauld, in 1766, requested some gentlemen of the academy of Paris to compose an epitaph for their tomb. She was disgusted with the barbarous lines that hitherto had marked the stone, where Abeillard and Heloisa lay. She did not live to see it executed; but the epitaph was written. Her successor, I believe, the present abbess, Madame de Roucy, pursued the laudable design, and on a marble stone engraved the following elegant inscription.

Hic  
 Sub eodem marmore jacent,  
 Hujus monasterii  
 Conditor, Petrus Abeillardus,  
 Et Abbatissa prima, Heloisa:  
 Olim Studiis, ingenio, amore, infaustis nuptiis  
 Et pœnitentia;  
 Nunc æterna, quod speramus, felicitate  
 Conjuncti.  
 Petrus Abeillardus obiit vigesima prima  
 Aprilis, Anno 1142:  
 Heloisa, decima septima Maii 1163.  
 Curis Carolæ de Roucy, Paracleti  
 Abbatissæ  
 1779.

<sup>s</sup> Annual Register, anno 1768.

IN

HISTORY OF THE LIVES OF  
IN ENGLISH.

Here

Under the same stone repose  
Peter Abeillard, the founder,  
And Heloisa, the first abbess,  
Of this monastery.

Alike in dispositions and in love,  
They were once united in the same pursuits,  
The same fatal marriage, and the same repentance;  
And now, in eternal happiness,  
We trust, they are not divided.

Peter Abeillard died the twenty-first of April, 1142:  
And Heloisa the seventeenth of May, 1163.

T H E E N D.



THE

LETTERS

OF

ABEILLARD and HELOISA.





T H E  
L E T T E R S  
O F  
A B E I L L A R D and H E L O I S A ;

FROM THE COLLECTION OF AMBOISE.

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By the Rev. J O S E P H B E R I N G T O N.

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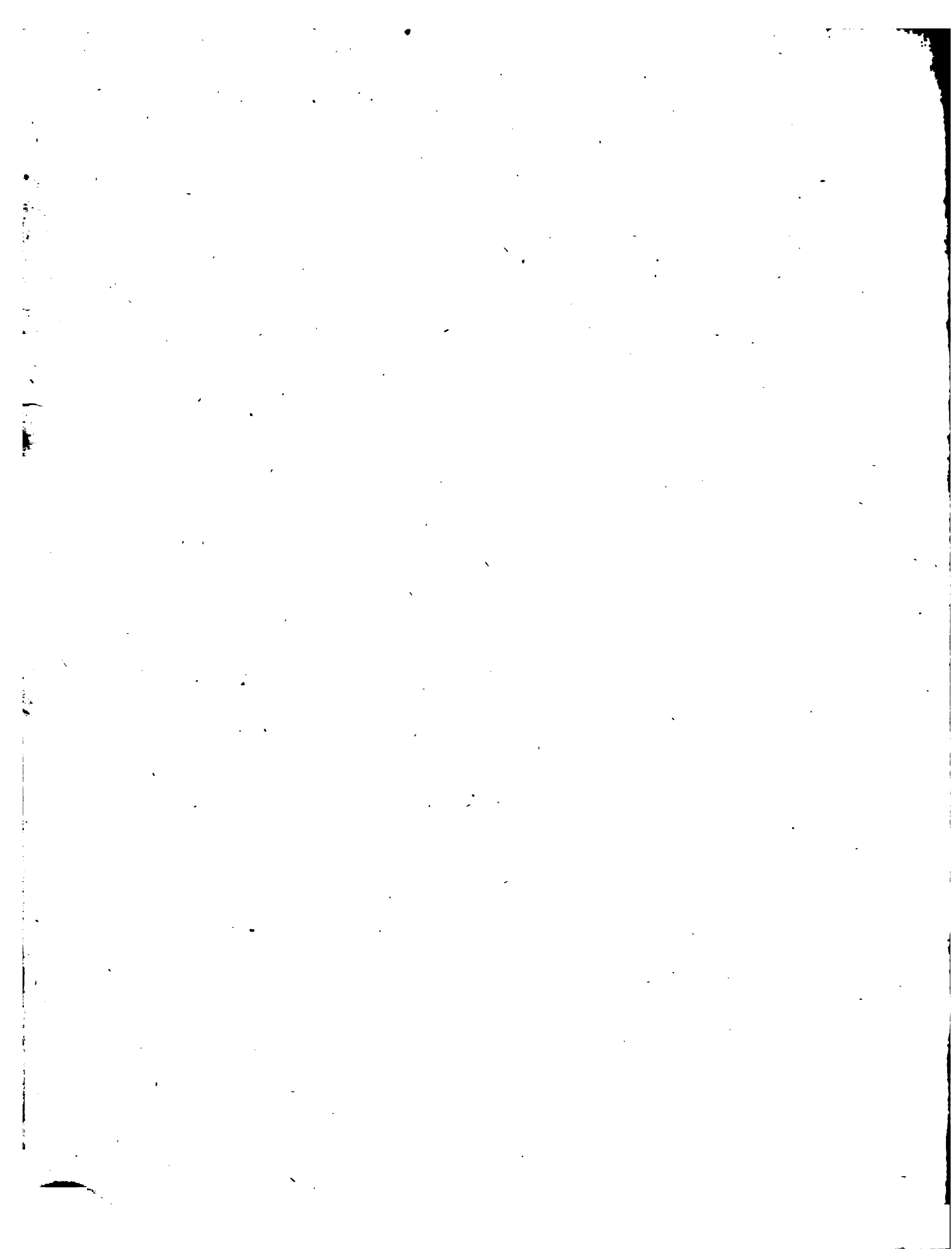
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BIRMINGHAM: PRINTED BY M. SWINNEY;  
FOR G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON, IN PATER-NOSTER-ROW,  
AND R. FAULDER, NEW BOND-STREET, LONDON.

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M.DCC.LXXXVII.





THE  
L E T T E R S  
O F  
A B E I L L A R D and H E L O I S A.

*The letter of Abeillard to his friend, which gave occasion to the following correspondence, should properly have a place here: But, as the whole substance of it is contained in the foregoing history, and it is besides extremely long, I take the liberty to omit it. They who have read the history, will not want it; and they who have not, would be little disposed to read the tedious memoirs from which it is taken.*

L E T T E R I.  
H E L O I S A TO A B E I L L A R D.

A LETTER of consolation you had written to a friend, my dearest Abeillard, was lately, as by chance, put into my hands. The superscription, in a moment, told me from whom it came; and the sentiments I felt for the writer, compelled me to read it more eagerly. I had lost the reality:  
I hoped

---

E P I S T O L A I.  
H E L O I S Æ A B Æ L A R D O.

*Domino suo, imo Patri; Conjugi suo, imo Fratri, Ancilla sua, imo Filia; ipse  
Uxor, imo Soror; Abælardo Heloisa.*

MISSAM ad Amicum pro consolatione Epistolam, dilectissime, vestram ad me forte quidam nuper attulit. Quam ex ipsa statim tituli fronte vestram esse considerans, tanto ardentius eam coepi legere, quanto Scriptorem ipsum charius amplector: ut cujus rem perdidici, verbis saltem, tanquã ejus quadam imagine

I hoped therefore from his words, a faint image of himself, to draw some comfort. But alas! for I well remember it, almost every line was marked with gall and wormwood. It related the lamentable story of our conversion, and the long list of your own unabating sufferings.

Indeed, you amply fulfilled the promise you there made to your friend, that, in comparison of your own, his misfortunes should appear as nothing, or as light as air.—Having exposed the persecutions you had suffered from your masters, and the cruel deed of my uncle, you were naturally led to a recital of the hateful and invidious conduct of Albericus of Reims, and Lotulphus of Lombardy. By their suggestions, your admirable work on the Trinity was condemned to the flames, and yourself were thrown into confinement. This you did not omit to mention. The machinations of the abbot of St. Denys, and of your false brethren, are then brought forward; but chiefly, for from them you had most to suffer, the calumnious aspersions of those false apostles, Norbert and Bernard, whom envy had roused against you. It was even, you say, imputed as a crime to you, to have given the name of Paraclet, contrary to

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imagine recreer. Erant, memini, hujus Epistolæ fere omnia felle & absinthio plena, quæ scilicet nostræ conversationis miserabilem historiam, & tuas, unice, cruces assiduas referebant.

Complesti re vera in Epistola illa, quod in exordio ejus Amico promissisti, ut videlicet in comparatione tuarum suas molestias nullas vel parvas reputaret. Ubi quidem expositis prius magistrorum tuorum in te persecutionibus, deinde in corpûs tuum summæ proditiōis injuria, ad condiscipulorum quoque tuorum Alberici videlicet Remensis, & Lotulfi Lombardi execrabilem invidiam, & infestationem nimiam stilum contulisti.—Quorum quidem suggestionibus quid de glorioso

to the common practice, to the oratory you had erected. In fine, the incessant persecutions of that cruel tyrant of St. Gildas and of those execrable monks, whom yet you call your children, and to which, at this moment, you are exposed, close the melancholy tale of a life of sorrow.

Who, think you, could read or hear these things, and not be moved to tears? What then must be my situation? The singular precision, with which each event is related, could but more strongly renew my sorrows. I was doubly agitated, because I perceived the tide of danger was still rising against you. Are we then to despair of your life? And must our breasts, trembling at every sound, be hourly alarmed by the rumours of that terrible event?

For Christ's sake, my Abeillard, and he, I trust, as yet protects you, do inform us, and that repeatedly, of each circum-

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glorioso illo Theologiæ tuæ opere, quid de te ipso quasi in carcere damnato actum sit, non prætermisisti. Inde ad Abbatis tui fratrumque falsorum machinationem accessisti, & detractiones illas, tibi gravissimas, duorum illorum Pseudo-apostolorum à prædictis æmulis in te commotas, atque ad scandalum plerisque subortum de nomine Paracleti Oratorio præter consuetudinem imposito: denique ad intolerabiles illas & adhuc continuas vitæ persecutiones, crudelissimi scilicet illius exactoris, & pessimorum, quos filios nominas, Monachorum profectus, miserabilem Historiam consummasti.

Quæ cum siccis oculis neminem vel legere vel audire posse æstimem: tanto dolores meos amplius renovarunt, quanto diligentius singula exprefferunt, & eo magis auxerunt, quo in te adhuc pericula crescere retulisti; ut omnes pariter de vita tua desperare cogamur, & quotidie ultimos illos de nece tua rumores trepidantia nostra corda, & palpitantia pectora expectent.

Per ipsum itaque, qui te sibi adhuc quoquomodo protegit, Christum obsecramus; quatenus ancillulas ipsius & tuas crebris literis de his, in quibus adhuc

circumstance of your present dangers. I and my sisters are the sole remains of all your friends. Let us, at least, partake of your joys and sorrows. The condolence of others is used to bring some relief to the sufferer ; and a load laid on many shoulders is more easily supported. But should the storm subside a little, then be even more solicitous to inform us, for your letters will be messengers of joy. In short, whatever be their contents, to us they must always bring comfort ; because this, at least, they will tell us, that we are remembered by you.

How pleasing are the letters of absent friends, Seneca, I remember, teaches us by his own example. “ I thank you, “ says he to his friend Lucilius, for your frequent letters. “ By this you do all you can to be in my company. The “ moment I open your letters, I see Lucilius before me.” And, indeed, if the portraits of our friends can give us pleasure, and ease the pain of absence, by the weak impressions

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*fluctuas, naufragiis certificare digneris ; ut nos saltem quæ tibi solæ remanemus, doloris vel gaudii participes habeas. Solent etenim dolenti nonnullam afferre consolationem qui condolent, & quodlibet onus pluribus impositum levius sustinetur, sive defertur. Quod si paululum hæc tempestas quieverit, tanto amplius maturandæ sunt literæ, quanto sunt jucundiores futuræ. De quibuscumque autem nobis scribas, non parvum nobis remedium conferes ; hoc saltem uno quod te nostri memorem esse monstrabis.*

Quam jocundæ vero sint absentium Literæ amicorum, ipse nos exemplo proprio Seneca docet, ad amicum Lucilium quodam loco sic scribens : “ Quod “ frequenter mihi scribis, gratias ago. Nam quo uno modo potes te mihi “ ostendis. Nunquam epistolam tuam accipio, quin protinus una simus.” Si imagines nobis amicorum absentium jocundæ sunt, quæ memoriam renovant, & desiderium absentiae falso atq; inani solatio levant : quanto jucundiores.

sions they make ; what may not be said of letters, which speak the genuine sentiments of the dear absent friend ?—God be thanked ! no invidious passion can forbid, and no obstacle can hinder this manner of your being present with us. On your side let no indifference, I pray, be a retardment to it.

You wrote to your friend a long epistle, and to alleviate his misfortunes you recounted your own. By this too plain narration, intended for his comfort, you have added much to our sorrows. The hand which poured balm into his wounds, only served to widen ours : it even added some fresh gashes to our long-bleeding bosoms. And will you, who are so anxious to ease the pain, which other hands have given, refuse to heal the wounds yourself have made ? You complied, I own, with the desires of a friend and of a fellow-creature ; and in so doing, the great duties of friendship and of society were fulfilled : but to us, Abeillard, you are bound by a stronger tie. We are not your friends only and your fellow-creatures : the tenderest affections have united  
us,

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*diqres sunt literæ, quæ amici absentis veras notas afferunt?—Deo autem gratias, quod hoc saltem modo præsentiam tuam nobis reddere nulla invidia prohiberis, nulla difficultate præpediris : nulla (obsecro) negligentia retarderis.*

*Scripsisti ad amicum prolixæ consolationem Epistolæ & pro adversitatibus quidem fuis, sed de tuis. Quas videlicet tuas diligenter commemorans, cum ejus stunderes consolationi, nostræ plurimum addidisti desolationi, & dum ejus mederi vulneribus cuperes, nova quædam nobis vulnera doloris infixisti, & priora auxisti. Sana, obsecro, ipse quæ fecisti, qui quæ alii fecerunt, curare satagis. Morem quidem amico & focio gessisti, & tam amicitia quam societatis debitum persolvisti : sed majori te debito nobis adstrinxisti, quas non tam amicas, quam*

us, for the inhabitants of the Paraclet are your daughters. Even, if nature or religion can suggest a more tender name, to that we are entitled.

To prove this, no arguments are necessary. Even were we silent, the walls of our monastery would proclaim it. Under God, you alone were the founder of this place; you alone erected its oratory; and you alone established its congregation. You raised nothing upon the foundations of others. Whatever the eye sees is your erection. This solitude, the retreat of wild beasts, and the receptacle of thieves, had not known the habitations of domestic life. But you, on the very dens of those beasts, and in the lurking holes of robbers, where the name of God had not been heard, raised a temple to his name, and you dedicated it to his Holy Spirit. To this the donations of kings or princes did not contribute: you wanted not their assistance; for your own powers were great and ample. From all quarters an almost infinite number of scholars was seen crowding to be

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*amicissimas, non tam socias quam filias convenit nominari: vel si quod dulcius & sanctius vocabulum potest excogitari.*

*Quanto autem debito te erga eas obligaveris, non argumentis, non testimoniis indiget, ut quasi dubium comprobetur: & si omnes taceant, res ipsa clamat. Hujus quippe loci tu, post Deum, solus es fundator, solus hujus Oratorii constructor, solus hujus Congregationis ædificator. Nihil hic super alienum ædificasti fundamentum. Totum quod hic est, tua creatio est. Solitudo hæc feris tantum, sive latronibus vacans, nullam hominum habitationem noverat, nullam domum habuerat. In ipsis cubilibus ferarum, in ipsis latibulis latronum, ubi nec nominari Deus solet, divinum erexisti tabernaculum, & Spiritui Sancto proprium dedicasti templum. Nihil ad hoc ædificandum ex Regum vel Principum opibus intulisti, cum plurima posses & maxima, ut quicquid fieret, tibi soli posset adscribi. Clerici sive Scholares huc certatim ad disciplinam*

be instructed by you. They supplied whatever else was necessary. Even churchmen, who had been used to live on the benefactions of others ; whose hands were ever open to receive but not to give ; became here profuse, and even importunate to pour in their contributions.

Our new establishment, therefore, is strictly yours. But, can the young plant prosper, if it be not often watered with peculiar care ? We are women, Abeillard, by nature weak and delicate. Thus, had our society been long formed, it would still be exposed to much danger. But now, if you give us not all your care and all your diligence, how shall we brave the storm ? The apostle says : “ I have planted, “ Apollo has watered, but God has given the increase.” He is writing to the Corinthians, whom he had lately converted to the christian faith : his own disciple Apollo, had then given them further instructions ; and divine grace had completed the work. But you cultivate a vineyard, which you have

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disciplinam tuam confluentes omnia ministrabant necessaria ; & qui de beneficiis vivebant Ecclesiasticis, nec oblationes facere noverant, sed suscipere, & qui manus ad suscipiendum, non ad dandum, habuerant, hic in oblationibus faciendis prodigi atque importuni fiebant.

Tua itaque, vere tua hæc est proprie in sancto proposito novella plantatio, cujus adhuc teneris maxime plantis frequens, ut proficiant, necessaria est irrigatio. Satis ex ipsa fœminei sexus natura debilis est hæc plantatio : est infirma, etsi non esset nova. Unde diligentiore culturam exigit & frequentiore, juxta illud Apostoli : “ Ego plantavi, Apollo rigavit, Deus autem “ incrementum dedit.” Plantaverat Apostolus atque fundaverat in fide per prædicationis suæ doctrinam Corinthios, quibus scribebat. Rigaverat postmodum eos ipse Apostoli discipulus Apollo sacris exhortationibus, & sic eis incrementum virtutum divina largita est gratia. Vitis alienæ vineam, quam non plantasti, in amaritudinem tibi conversam, admonitionibus sæpe castis, & sacris.

have not planted ; and your sacred admonitions are lost on an ungrateful soil. I speak of the monks of St. Gildas, of which you are abbot. Rather recollect then what you owe to us. You preach to them, but you preach in vain. Your words are pearls which you throw to swine. The treasures, which are lost on them, should be kept for us, who are docile, who are obedient. And you, who are so prodigal to your enemies, do reflect on what you owe to your own children.—But I will say nothing of others : think only how much you are indebted to me. Whatever obligations bind you to the devout part of my sex, are all concentrated in your Heloisa.

You need not be told, how many treatises the holy fathers of the church have written for our instruction, and how earnestly they have laboured to inform, to advise, and to console us. Must my ignorance suggest knowledge to the learned Abeillard ?—Long ago, indeed, when my mind was weak in the first impressions of duty, your neglect of me surprised me not a little. Neither moved by religion, nor by love for me, nor by the example of the holy fathers, did  
you

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*facris frustra sermonibus excolis. Quid tuæ debeas attende, qui sic curam impendis alienæ. Doces & admones rebelles, nec proficis. Frustra ante porcos divini eloquii margaritas spargis. Qui obstinatis tanta impendis, quid obedientibus debeas considera. Qui tanta hostibus largiris, quid filiabus debeas meditare. Atque ut cæteras omittam, quanto erga me te obligaveris debito, pensa : ut quod devotis communiter debes fœminis, unicæ tuæ devotius solvas.*

*Quot autem & quantos Tractatus in doctrina, vel exhortatione, seu etiam consolatione sanctarum fœminarum sancti Patres, & quanta eos diligentia composuerint, tua melius excellentia quam nostra parvitas novit. Unde non mediocri admiratione nostræ teneræ conversionis initia tua jamdudum oblivio movit, quod nec reverentia Dei, nec amore nostri, nec sanctorum Patrum exemplis*



you ever aim to fix my fluctuating mind : not even when long grief had worn me down, did you come to see me, or even send me one line of comfort. Yet, surely after the bond of matrimony had cemented our union, your obligations to me became more binding. Who does not know how immoderate was the love I bore you ; and from thence have I no pretensions to a peculiar return ?

My Abeillard, you well know how much I lost in losing you : and that infamous act of treachery, which, by a cruelty before unheard of, deprived me of you, even tore me from myself. The loss was great indeed, but the manner of it was doubly excruciating.—When the cause of grief is most pungent, then should consolation apply her strongest medicines. But it is you only can administer relief : by you I was wounded, and by you I must be healed. It is in your power alone to give me pain, to give me joy, and to give me comfort. And it is you only that are obliged to do it.—I have obeyed the last tittle of all your commands ; and  
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*emplis admonitus, fluctuantem me & jam diutino mœrore confectam, vel sermone præsentem, vel Epistola absentem consolari tentaveris.—Cui quidem tanto te majore debito noveris obligatum, quanto te amplius nuptialis fœdere sacramenti constat esse adstrictum : & eo te magis mihi obnoxium, quo te semper, ut omnibus patet, immoderato amore complexa sum.*

*Noſti chariſſime, noverunt omnes, quanta in te amiſerim, & quam miſerabili caſu ſummâ & ubique nota proſtitio me ipſam quoque mihi tecum abſtulerit, & incomparabiliter major ſit dolor ex amiſſionis modo, quam ex dampno. Quo vero major eſt dolendi cauſa, majora ſunt conſolationis adhibenda remedia. Non utique ab alio, ſed à teipſo, ut qui ſolus es in cauſa dolendi, ſolus ſis in gratia conſolandi. Solus quippe es qui me contriſtare, qui me lætificare, ſeu conſolari valeas. Et ſolus es qui plurimum id mihi debeas, & tunc maxime cum univerſa quæ juſſeris in tantum impleverim, ut cum te in aliquo offendere*

so far was I unable to oppose them, that; to comply with your wishes, I could bear to sacrifice myself. One thing remains, which is still greater, and will hardly be credited: my love for you had risen to such a degree of phrenzy, that to please you, it even deprived itself of what alone in the universe it valued, and that for ever. No sooner did I receive your commands, than I quitted at once the habit of the world, and with it all the reluctance of my nature. I meant that you should be the sole possessor of whatever I had once a right to call my own.

Heaven knows! in all my love it was you, and you only I fought for. I looked for no dowry, no alliances of marriage. I was even insensible to my own pleasures: nor had I a will to gratify. All was absorbed in you. I call Abeillard to witness.—In the name of *wife* there may be something more holy, something more imposing; but the name of *mistress* was ever to me a more charming sound—The more I humbled myself before you, the greater right I thought, I should have to your favour; and thus also I hoped the less to injure the splendid reputation you had acquired.

This

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offendere non possem, meipsum pro jussu tuo perdere sustinerem. Et quod majus est, dictuque mirabile, in tantam versus est amor insaniam, ut quod solum appetebat, hoc ipse sibi sine spe recuperationis auferret. Cum ad tuam statim jussionem tam habitum ipsa quam animum immutarem: ut te tam corporis mei quam animi unicum possessorem ostenderem.

Nihil unquam (Deus scit) in te nisi te requisivi: te pure, non tua concupiscens. Non matrimonii fœdera, non dotes aliquas expectavi, non denique meas voluptates, aut voluntates, sed tuas (sicut ipse nosti) adimplere studii.—Et si uxoris nomen sanctius ac validius videtur, dulcius mihi semper extitit amicæ vocabulum; aut si non indigneris, concubinæ vel scorti. Ut quo me videlicet pro te amplius humiliarem, ampliorem apud te consequerer gratiam; & sic etiam excellentiæ tuæ gloriam minus læderem.

Quod

This circumstance, on your own account, you did not quite forget to mention in the letter to your friend. You related also some of the arguments I then urged, to deter you from that fatal marriage; but you suppressed the greater part, by which I was induced to prefer love to matrimony, and liberty to chains. I call heaven to witness! Should Augustus, master of the world, offer me his hand in marriage, and secure to me the uninterrupted command of the universe, I should deem it at once more eligible and more honourable to be called the mistress of Abeillard, than the wife of Cæsar. The source of merit is not in riches or in power: these are the gifts of fortune; but virtue only gives worth and excellence.

The woman, who prefers a rich to a poor man, shews she has a venal soul. In a husband, it is his wealth, and not himself, which she admires; and to her, who marries with this view, some reward may be due, but no gratitude. It is clear that I have not misconstrued her intentions: propose  
but

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Quod & tu ipse, tui gratia, oblitus penitus non fuisti, in ea, quam supra memini, ad Amicum Epistola pro consolatione directa. Ubi & rationes nonnullas, quibus te à conjugii nostri infauis thalamis, revocare conabar, exponere non es dedignatus: sed plerisque tacitis, quibus amorem conjugio, libertatem vinculo præferebam. Deum testem invoco, si me Augustus, universo præsidens mundo, matrimonii honore dignaretur, totumque mihi orbem confirmaret in perpetuo præsidendum, charius mihi & dignius videretur tua dici meretrix, quam illius Imperatrix. Non enim quo quisque ditior sive potentior, ideo & melior: fortunæ illud est, hoc virtutis.

Nec se minime venalem æstimet esse quæ libentius ditiori quam pauperi nubit, & plus in marito sua quam ipsa concupiscit. Certe quamcumque ad nuptias hæc concupiscentia ducit, merces ei potius quam gratia debetur. Certum quippe est eam res ipsas, non hominem sequi, & se, si posset, velle prostituere

but a richer match, and if not too late, she will embrace it with ardour. The truth of my opinion the learned Aspasia has confirmed in a conversation with Xenophon and his wife, as related by Eschines the disciple of Socrates. When to effect a reconciliation betwixt them, she had proposed this reasoning, Aspasia thus concludes: "When you have got so far, as mutually to be convinced that there lives not a better man, and a more fortunate woman, all your thoughts will be directed to produce the greatest good: Xenophon will be happy in the reflection that he is married to the best of women, and she, on her side, that her husband is the best of men."

These sentiments are beautiful: they seem the production rather of wisdom herself, than of philosophy.—But in the married state, should this favourable opinion be even grounded on error, how charming is it to be thus deceived! It produces love, and on this rests the surest pledge of mutual fidelity; while purity of mind co-operates far more efficaciously than her sister virtue.

But

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ditiori. Sicut inductio illa Aspasie Philosophæ apud Socraticum Æschinem cum Xenophonte & uxore ejus habita manifeste convincit. Quam quidem inductionem cum prædicta Philosophia ad reconciliandos invicem illos proposuisset, tali fine conclusit: "Quia ubi hoc peregeritis, ut neque vir melior, neque femina in terris lætior sit: profecto semper id quod optimum putabis esse multo maxime requiretis: ut & tu maritus sis quam optimæ, & hæc quam optimo viro nupta sit."

Sancta profecto hæc & plusquam Philosophica est sententia, ipsius potius Sophiæ, quam Philosophiæ dicenda. Sanctus hic error, and beata fallacia in conjugatis, ut perfecta dilectio illæsa custodiat matrimonii fœdera, non tam corporum continentiam, quam animorum pudicitiam.

At

But that happiness which in others is, sometimes, the effect of fancy, in me was the child of evidence. They might think their husbands perfect, and were happy in the idea; but I knew that you were such, and the universe knew the same. Thus the more my affection was secured from all possible error, the more steady became its flame. Where was found the king or the philosopher that had emulated your reputation? Was there a village, a city, a kingdom, that did not ardently wish even to see you? When you appeared in public, who did not run to behold you? And when you withdrew, every neck was stretched, every eye sprang forward to pursue you. The married and the unmarried women, when Abeillard was away, longed for his company; and, when he he was present, every bosom was on fire. No lady of distinction, no princess, that did not envy Heloisa the possession of her Abeillard.

You possessed, indeed, two qualifications, a tone of voice, and a grace in singing, which gave you the controul over every female heart. These powers were peculiarly yours; for

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At quod error cæteris, veritas mihi manifesta contulerat. Cum quod illæ videlicet de suis æstimarent maritis, hoc ego de te, hoc mundus universus non tam crederet, quam sciret. Ut tanto verior in te meus amor existeret, quanto ab errore longius absisteret. Quis etenim Regum aut Philosophorum tuam exæquare famam poterat? Quæ te regio, aut civitas, seu villa videre non æstuabat? Quis te, rogo, in publicum procedentem conspiciere non festinabat, ac discedentem collo-erecto, oculis directis non insectabatur? Quæ conjugata, quæ virgo non concupiscebat absentem, & non exardebat in præsentem? Quæ Regina vel præpotens fœmina gaudiis meis non invidebat vel thalamis?

Duo autem, fateor, tibi specialiter inerant, quibus fœminarum quarum libet animos statim allicere poteras; distandi videlicet, & cantandi gratia.

for I do not know that they ever fell to the share of any other philosopher. To soften, by playful amusement, the stern labours of philosophy, you composed several sonnets on love, and on similar subjects. These you were often heard to sing, when the harmony of your voice gave new charms to the expression. In all circles nothing was talked of but Abeillard: even the most ignorant, who could not judge of composition, were enchanted by the melody of your voice. Female hearts were unable to resist the impression. Thus was my name soon carried to distant nations, for the loves of Heloise and Abeillard were the constant theme of all your songs. What wonder, if I became the subject of general envy!

You possessed, besides, every endowment of mind and body. But alas! if my happiness then raised the envy of others, will they not now be compelled to pity me? And surely, even she, who was then my enemy, will now drop a tear at my sad reverse of fortune.

You

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Quæ cæteros minime philosophos affectos esse novimus. Quibus quidem, quasi ludo quodam, laborem exercitii recreans Philosophici, pleraque amatorio metro vel rithmo composita reliquisti carmina, quæ præ nimia suavitate, tam dictaminis, quam cantus, sæpius frequentata, tuum in ore omnium nomen incessanter tenebant: ut etiam illiteratos melodiæ dulcedo tui non fineret immemores esse. Atque hinc maxime in amorem tui fœminæ suspirabant. Et cum horum pars maxima carminum nostros decantaret amores, multis me regionibus brevi tempore nunciavit, & multarum in me fœminarum accendit invidiam.

Quod enim bonum animi vel corporis tuam non exornabat adolescentiam? Quam tunc mihi invidentem, nunc tantis privatæ deliciis compati calamitas mea non compellat? Quem, vel quàm licet hostem, primitus, debita compassio mihi nunc non emolliat?

Et

You know, Abeillard, I was the great cause of your misfortunes ; but yet I was not guilty. It is the motive with which we act, and not the event of things that makes us criminal. Equity weighs the intention, and not the mere actions we may have done.—What, at all times, were my dispositions in your regard, you, who knew them, can only judge, To you I refer all my actions, and on your decision I rest my cause. I call no other witness.

But how has it happened, tell me, that, after my retreat from the world, which was your own work, I have been so forgotten or so neglected, that you never came either personally to recreate my solitude, or ever wrote to console me? If you can, account for this conduct ; or I must tell you my own suspicions, which are also the general suspicions of the world. It was passion, Abeillard, and not friendship that drew you to me : it was not love, but a more base propension. The incitements to pleasure removed, every other more gentle sentiment, to which they might seem to give life, has vanished with them.

This

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Et plurimum nocens, plurimum (ut nosti) sum innocens. Non enim rei effectus, sed efficientis affectus, in crimine est. Nec quæ fiunt, sed quo animo fiunt, æquitas pensat. Quem autem animum in te semper habuerim, solus qui expertus es, judicare potes. Tuo examini cuncta committo, tuo per omnia cedo testimonio.

Dic unum si vales, cum post conversionem nostram, quam tu solus facere decrevisti, in tantam tibi negligentiam atque oblivionem venerim, ut nec colloquio præsentis recreer, nec absentis æpistola consoletur : Dic (inquam) si vales, aut ego quod sentio, imo quod omnes suspicantur, dicam. Concupiscentia te mihi potius quam amicitia sociavit, libidinis ardor, potius quam amor. Ubi igitur quod desiderabas cessavit, quicquid propter hoc exhibebas pariter evanuit.

Hæc

This, my friend, is not so much mine, as the general conjecture : It is the common suspicion of all who know us. Would to God, it were I only who thought it ; and that your own love could devise some excuse which might ease my pain ! Were it in my power, even I would willingly invent some pretext, which by seeming to lessen the pretensions I have to your notice, might extenuate your fault.

Do attend to my request, and, I think, you will find it moderate and easy to be complied with. I am not to have the happiness of your company ; give me therefore what else you can. I ask but a few lines ; and can you, who are so rich in words, refuse me that faint image of yourself ? What reason have I to expect you will be more liberal in things of consequence, if even you shew yourself niggardly in a few words?—Having, as I said, complied with all your injunctions, I thought, indeed, I had great pretensions to your esteem. Even at this moment I am a victim to your will. It was not religion that called me to the austerities of the cloister : I was then in the bloom of youth : but you ordered

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*Hæc, dilectissime, non tam mea est, quam omnium conjectura, non tam specialis quam communis, non tam privata quam publica. Utinam mihi soli sic videretur, atque alios in excusationem sui amor tuus inveniret, per quos dolor meus paululum resideret. Utinam occasiones fingere possem, quibus te excusando mei quoquomodo tegerem utilitatem.*

*Attende, obsecro, quæ requiro ; & parva hæc videbuntur & tibi facillima. Dum tui præsentia fraudor, verborum faltem votis, quorum tibi copia est, tuæ mihi imaginis præsentia dulcedinem. Frustra te in rebus dapilem expecto, si in verbis avarum sustineo. Nunc vero plurimum à te me promeriri credideram, cum omnia propter te compleverim, nunc in tuo maxime perseverans obsequio. Quamquidem juvenculam ad monasticæ conversationis asperitatem non religionis devotio, sed tua tantum pertraxit jussio. Ubi si nihil a te promerear*



ordered it, and I obeyed. For this sacrifice, if I have no merit in your eyes ; vain indeed is all my labour ! From God I can look for no reward, for whose sake, it is plain, I have as yet done nothing. When you had resolved to quit the world, I followed you, rather I ran before you. It seems you had the image of the patriarch's wife before your eyes : you feared I might look back, and therefore before you could surrender your own liberty, I was to be devoted. In that one instance, I confess, your mistrust of me tore my heart : Abeillard, I blushed for you. For my part, Heaven knows ! had I seen you hastening to perdition, at a single nod, I should not have hesitated to have preceded, or to have followed you. My soul was no longer in my own possession. It was in yours. Even now, if it is not with you, it is no where. It cannot exist without you. But do receive it kindly. There it will be happy, if it find you indulgent ; if you only return kindness for kindness, trifles for things of moment, and a few words for all the deeds of my life. Were you less sure of my love, you would be more solicitous.

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*merear, quam frustra laborem ; dijudica. Nulla mihi super hoc merces expectanda est à Deo, cujus adhuc amore nihil me constat egisse.—Properantem te ad Deum secuta sum habitu, imo præcessi. Quasi enim memor uxoris Loth retro conversæ, prius me sacris vestibus & professione Monastica quam teipsum Deo mancipasti. In quo, fateor, uno minus de te me confidere vehementer dolui atque erubui. Ego autem (Deus scit) ad Vulcania loca te properantem præcedere vel sequi pro jussu tuo minime dubitarem. Non enim mecum animus meus, sed tecum erat. Sed & nunc maxime si tecum non est, nusquam est. Esse vero sine te nequaquam potest. Sed ut tecum bene sit age obsecro. Bene autem tecum fuerit, si te propitium invenerit, si gratiam referas pro gratia, modica pro magnis, verba pro rebus. Utinam, dilecte, tua de me dilectio*  
minus

solicitous. But because my conduct has rendered you secure, you neglect me. Once more recollect what I have done for you, and how much you are indebted to me.

While together we enjoyed the pleasures which love affords, the motive of my attachment was to others uncertain. The event has proved, on what principles I started. To obey you, I sacrificed all my pleasures. I reserved nothing, the hope only excepted, that so I should become more perfectly your's. How unjust then is Abeillard, if, as my deserts increase, he make the less return! I ask but trifles, and trifles which require no labour to be complied with.

By that God then, to whom your life is consecrated, I conjure you, give me so much of yourself, as is at your disposal, that is, send me some lines of consolation. Do it with this design at least, that, my mind being more at ease, I may serve God with more alacrity. When formerly the love of pleasure was your pursuit, how often did I hear  
from

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minus confideret, ut sollicitior esset! Sed quo te amplius nunc securum reddidi, negligentior sustineo. Memento obsecro quæ fecerim: & quanta debeas attende.

Dum tecum carnali fruerer voluptate, utrum id amore, vel libidine agerem, incertum pluribus habebatur. Nunc autem finis indicat, quo id inchoaverim principio. Omnes denique mihi voluptates interdixi, ut tuæ parerem voluntati. Nihil mihi reservavi, nisi sic tuam nunc præcipue fieri. Quæ vero tua sit iniquitas, perpende, si merenti amplius perfolvis minus, imo nihil penitus: præsertim cum parvum sit quod exigeris, & tibi facillimum.

Per ipsum itaque, cui te obtulisti, Deum te obsecro, ut quoquo modo potes tuam mihi præsentiam reddas, consolationem videlicet mihi aliquam rescribendo. Hoc saltem pacto, ut sic recreata divino alacrior vacem obsequio. Cum me ad temporales olim voluptates expeteres, crebris me Epistolis visitabas,  
frequenti

from you? In your songs the name of Heloisa was made familiar to every tongue: it was heard in every street: the walls of every house repeated it. With how much greater propriety might you now call me to God, than you did then to pleasure. Weigh your obligations: think on my petition.—I have written you a long letter, but the conclusion shall be short.—My only friend, Farewel.

LETTER II.

ABEILLARD TO HELOISA.

**I**F since our conversion from the world to God, I have not written to console, or to admonish you, it was not the effect of indifference. Ascribe it to the high opinion, I have ever entertained of your wisdom and prudence. How could I think, that she stood in need of my assistance, to whom heaven had so largely distributed its best gifts? You were

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frequenti carmine tuam in ore omnium Heloissam ponebas. Me plateæ omnes, me domus singulæ resonabant. Quanto autem rectius me nunc in Deum, quam tunc in libidinem excitares? Perpende obsecro quæ debes, attende quæ postulo; & longam Epistolam brevi fine concludo. Vale Unice.

ABELARDI RESPONSIO.

*Heloissæ, dilectissimæ Sorori suæ in Christo, Abælardus, Frater ejus in ipso.*

QUOD post nostram à sæculo ad Deum conversionem nondum tibi aliquid consolationis vel exhortationis scripserim, non negligentia meæ, sed tuæ, de qua semper plurimum confido, prudentia imputandum est. Non enim

were able, I knew, by example as by word, to instruct the ignorant, to comfort the pusillanimous, and to admonish the lukewarm.

When prioress of Argenteuil, these duties, I remember, you used long ago to practise : and if now you give the same attention to your daughters, as you did then to your sisters, more is not requisite ; and all that I could say would be of no value. But if, in your humility, you think otherwise, and that my instructions can avail you any thing ; tell me only on what subjects you would have me write, and, as God shall direct me, I will endeavour to satisfy you.

I thank God that, exciting in your breasts an anxious solicitude for the constant and imminent dangers to which I am exposed, he has taught you to sympathise with my sufferings. Thus may I hope for the divine protection by your prayers, and soon see Satan bruised under my feet. It is with this view that I hasten to send you the form of prayer,  
you

eam his indigere credidi, cui abundanter quæ necessaria sunt, divina gratia impertivit ; ut tam verbis quam exemplis errantes valeas docere, pusillannimos consolari, tepidos exhortari.

Sicut & facere jamdudum consuevisti, cum sub Abbatissa Prioratum obtineres. Quod si nunc tanta diligentia tuis provideas filiabus, quanta tunc sororibus ; fatis esse credimus, ut jam omnino superfluum doctrinam, vel exhortationem nostram, arbitremur. Sin autem humilitati tuæ aliter videtur, & in iis etiam, quæ ad Deum pertinent, magisterio nostro atque scriptis indiges, super his quæ velis, scribe mihi, ut ad ipsam rescribam prout Dominus mihi annuerit.

Deo autem gratias, qui gravissimorum & assiduorum periculorum meorum sollicitudinem vestris cordibus inspirans, afflictionis meæ participes vos fecit ; ut orationum suffragiostrarum Divina miseratio me protegat, & velociter Sathanam sub pedibus nostris conterat. Ad hoc autem præcipue Psalterium,  
quod

you so earnestly requested, you, my sister, once dear to me in the world, but now most dear to me in Christ. By this means, you will offer to God a constant sacrifice of prayers, urging him to pardon our great and manifold sins, and to avert the hourly dangers which threaten me.

Many examples attest, how powerful before God and his saints are the prayers of the faithful; but chiefly of women for their friends, and of wives for their husbands. In this view the apostle admonishes us to pray without intermission.

—(He

quod a me sollicitè requisisti, soror in sæculo quondam chara, nunc in Christo charissima, mittere maturavi. In quo videlicet pro nostris magnis & multis excessibus, & quotidiana periculorum meorum instantia, jube Domino sacrificium immoles orationum.

Quantum autem locum apud Deum & Sanctos ejus fidelium orationes obtineant, & maxime mulierum pro charis suis, & uxorum pro viris, multa nobis occurrunt testimonia & exempla. Quod diligenter attendens Apostolus, sine intermissione orare nos admonet. Legimus Dominum Moyse dixisse, “ Dimitte te me ut irascatur furor meus.” Et Hieremiæ: “ Tu vero, inquit, noli orare pro populo hoc, & non obsistas mihi.” Ex quibus videlicet verbis manifeste Dominus ipse profitetur orationes Sanctorum, quasi quoddam frænum iræ ipsius immittere, quo scilicet ipsa coërceatur, ne quantum merita peccantium exigunt ipsa in eos sæviat. Ut quem ad vindictam justitia quasi spontaneum ducit, amicorum supplicatio flectat, & tanquam invitum quasi vi quadam retineat. Sic quippe oranti vel oraturo dicitur, “ Dimitte me, & ne obsistas mihi.” Præcipit Dominus ne oretur pro impiis. Orat justus Domino prohibente, & ab ipso impetrat quod postulat, & irati judicis sententiam immutat. Sic quippe de Moyse subjunctum est: “ Et placatus factus est Dominus de malignitate quam dixit facere populo suo.”

Scriptum est alibi de universis operibus Dei: “ Dixit, & facta sunt.” Hoc autem loco & dixisse memoratur quod de afflictione populus meruerat, & virtute orationis præventus non impleffe quod dixerat. Attende itaque quanta sit orationis virtus, si quod jubemur, oremus: quando id quod orare Prophetam

—(*He then goes on to prove this efficacy of prayer from the holy scriptures, insisting particularly on the examples of holy women :*

*he*

Deus prohibuit, orando tamen obtinuit, & ab eo quod dixerat eum avertit. Cui & alius Propheta dicit : “ Et cum iratus fueris, misericordiæ recordaberis.”

Audiant id atque advertant Principes terreni, qui occasione præpositæ & edictæ justitiæ suæ obstinati magis quam justi reperiunter, & sermissos videri erubescunt si misericordes fiant, & mendaces si edictum suum mutant, vel quod minus provide statuerunt non impleant, etsi verba rebus emendent. Quos quidem recte dixerim Jephthæ comparandos, qui quod stulte voverat, stultius adimplens, unicam interfecit.

Qui vero ejus membrum fieri cupit, tunc cum Psalmista dicit, “ Misericordiam & judicium cantabo tibi Domine. Misericordia, sicut scriptum est, judicium exaltat, attendens quod alibi Scriptura comminatur, Judicium sine misericordia in eum qui misericordiam non facit.”

Quod diligenter ipse Psalmista considerans, ad supplicationem uxoris Nabal Carmeli juramentum, quod ex justitia fecerat, de viro ejus scilicet & ipsius domo delenda, per misericordiam cassavit. Orationem itaque justitiæ prætulit, & quod vir deliquerat, supplicatio uxoris delevit.

In quo quidem tibi, soror, exemplum proponitur, & securitas datur, ut si hujus oratio apud hominem tantum obtinuit, quid apud Deum tua pro me audeat instruari. Plus quippe Deus, qui pater est noster, filios diligit ; quam David sœminam supplicantem. Et ille quidem pius & misericors habebatur, sed ipsa pietas & misericordia Deus est. Et quæ tunc supplicabat mulier, sœcularis erat & Laica, nec ex sanctæ devotionis professione Domino copulata. Quod si ex te minus ad impetrandum sufficias, sanctus qui tecum est, tam virginum quam viduarum Conventus, quod per te non potes, obtinebit. Cum enim discipulis Veritas dicat. “ Ubi duo vel tres congregati fuerint in nomine meo, ibi sum in medio eorum.” Et rursum, “ Si duo ex vobis consenserint de omni re quam petierunt, fiet illud à Patre meo :” Quis non videat quantum apud Deum valeat sanctæ congregationis frequens oratio ? Si, ut Apostolus asserit, “ Multum valet oratio justii assidua,” quid de multitudine sanctæ congregationis sperandum est ?

Nosti, charissima soror, ex Homilia Beati Gregorii, quantum suffragium invito seu contradicenti fratri oratio fratrum naturæ attulerit. De quo  
jam

*he tells her how much he confides in the prayers of the nuns of the Paraclet, and in her own, to which as her husband he claims a peculiar right.)*

But

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jam ad extremum ducto quanta periculi anxietate miserrima ejus anima laboraret, & quanta desperatione & tædio vitæ fratres ab oratione revocaret, quid ibi diligenter scriptum sit tuam minime latet prudentiam. Atque utinam confidentius te, & sanctarum Conventum sororum, ad orationem invitet, ut me scilicet vobis ipse vivum custodiat, per quem Paulo attestante, mortuos etiam suos de resurrectione mulieres acceperunt.

Si enim veteris & Evangelici Testamenti paginas revolvās, invenies maxima resurrectionis miracula folis vel maxime fœminis exhibita fuisse, pro ipsis, vel de ipsis facta. Duos quippe mortuos fuscitatos ad supplicationes maternas vetus commemorat Testamentum, per Eliam scilicet, & ipsius discipulum Helisæum. Evangelium vero trium tantum mortuorum fuscitationem à Domino factam continet, quæ mulieribus exhibita, maxime illud, quod supra commemoravimus, Apostolicum dictum rebus suis confirmant. “Acceperunt mulieres de resurrectione mortuos suos.” Filium quippe viduæ ad portam civitatis Naim fuscitatum matri reddidit, ejus compassione compunctus. Lazarum quoque amicum suum ad obsecrationem sororum ejus, Mariæ videlicet ac Marthæ, fuscitavit. Quo etiam Archifynagogi filiæ hanc ipsam gratiam ad petitionem patris impendente, “Mulieres de resurrectione mortuos suos acceperunt.” Cum hæc videlicet fuscitata proprium de morte receperit corpus, sicut illæ corpora fuorum. Et paucis quidem intervenientibus hæ factæ sunt resurrectiones. Vitæ vero nostræ conversationem multiplex vestræ devotionis oratio facile obtinebit.

Quarum tam abstinencia quam continentia Deo sacrata, quanto ipsi gratior habetur, tanto ipsum propitiorem inveniet. Et plerique fortassis horum qui fuscitati sunt nec fideles extiterunt, sicut nec vidua prædicta, cui non roganti filium Dominus fuscitavit, fidelis extitisse legitur. Nos autem invicem non solum fidei colligat integritas, verum etiam ejusdem religionis professio sociat.

Ut

But I will not insist on the supplications of your sisterhood, day and night devoted to the service of their maker; to you only I apply. I well know how powerful your intercession may be; and, in my present circumstances, I trust, it will be exerted. In your prayers then, ever remember him, who, in a particular manner, is your's. Urge your intreaties, for it is just you should be heard. An equitable judge cannot refuse it.

When

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Ut autem sacrosancti Collegii vestri nunc omittam Conventum, in quo plurimarum virginum ac viduarum devotio Domino jugiter deservit; ad te unam veniam, cujus apud Deum sanctitatem plurimum non ambigo posse, & quæ potes mihi præcipue debere, maxime in tantæ adversitatis laboranti discrimine. Memento itaque semper in orationibus tuis ejus, qui specialiter est tuus, & tanto confidentius in oratione vigila, quanto id esse tibi recognoscis justius, & ob hoc ipsi qui orandus est acceptabilius. Exaudi, obsecro, aure cordis, quod sæpius audisti aure corporis. Scriptum est in Proverbiis, "Mulier diligens corona est viro suo." Et rursum, "Qui invenit mulierem bonam, invenit bonum: & hauriet jucunditatem à Domino." Et iterum, "Domus & divitiæ dantur a parentibus, à Domino autem proprie uxor prudens." Et in Ecclesiastico, "Mulieris bonæ beatus vir." Et post pauca, "Pars bona, mulier bona." Et juxta authoritatem Apostolicam, "Sanctificatus est vir infidelis per mulierem fidelem."

Cujus quidem rei experimentum in regno præcipuè nostro, id est Francorum, divina specialiter exhibuit gratia, cum ad orationem videlicet uxoris magis quam ad sanctorum prædicationem, Clodoveo Rege ad fidem Christi converso, regnum sic universum divinis legibus mancipaverunt, ut exemplo maxime superiorum ad orationis instantiam inferiores provocarentur. Ad quamquidem instantiam Dominica nos vehementer invitans parabola: "Ille, inquit, si perseveraverit pulsans: dico vobis, quia si non dabit ei, eo quod amicus illius sit, propter improbitatem ejus furget, & dabit ei quotquot habet necessarios." Ex hac profecto, ut ita dicam, orationis improbitate, sicut supra memini, Moyse divinz justitiæ severitatem enervavit, & sententiam immutavit.

Nosti



When formerly I was with you, you recollect, my dear Heloisa, how fervently you recommended me to the care of Providence. Often in the day a particular prayer was repeated for me.—Removed as I now am from the Paraclet, and involved in greater danger, how much more pressing are my wants! Now then convince me of the sincerity of your regard. I entreat, I implore you.—(*Then comes the prayer, to be said for himself, which I have elsewhere copied.*)

But

Noſti, dilectiſſima, quantum charitatis affectum præſentis meæ Conventus olim veſter in oratione ſolitus fit exhibere. Ad expletionem namque quotidie ſingularum Horarum ſpecialem pro me Domino ſupplicationem hanc offerre conſuevit, ut Reſponſo proprio, cum Verſu ejus præmiſſis & decantatis, preces his & Collectam in hunc modum ſubjungeret. Reſponſum. “ Non me “ derelinquas, nec diſcedas à me Domine.” Verſ. “ In adjutorium meum “ ſemper intende Domine.” Preces. “ Salvum fac ſervum tuum Deus meus “ ſperantem in te. Domine exaudi orationem meam, & clamor meus ad te “ veniat.” Oratio. “ Deus qui per ſervulum tuum ancillulas tuas in nomine “ tuo dignatus es aggregare, te quæſumus; ut tam ipſi quam nobis in tua “ tribuas perfeverare voluntate. Per Dominum, &c.” Nunc autem abſenti mihi tanto amplius orationum veſtrarum opus eſt ſuffragio, quanto majoris anxietate periculi conſtringor. Supplicando itaque poſtulo, & poſtulando ſupplico, quatenus præcipue nunc abſens experiar quam vere charitas veſtra erga abſentem extiterit, ſingulis videlicet Horis expletis, hunc orationis propriæ modum adnectens. Reſp. “ Ne derelinquas me, Domine pater & dominator “ vitæ meæ, ut non corruam in conſpectu adverſariorum meorum, & ne gaudeat “ de me inimicus meus.” Verſ. “ Apprehende arma & ſcutum, & exurge in “ adjutorium mihi. Ne gaudeat.” Preces. “ Salvum fac ſervum tuum Deus “ meus ſperantem in te. Mitte ei Domine auxilium de ſancto: & de Sion tu- “ ere eum. Eſto ei Domine turris fortitudinis à facie inimici. Domine exau- “ di orationem meam: & clamor meus ad te veniat.” Oratio. “ Deus qui “ per ſervum tuum ancillulas tuas in nomine tuo dignatus es aggregare, te quæ- “ ſumus, ut eum ab omni adverſitate protegas, & ancillis tuis incolumem “ reddas. Per Dominum &c.

Quod

But if, by the permission of heaven, my enemies should so far prevail as to take away my life ; or if, by any chance, I should be numbered with the dead ; it is in my prayer that my body be conveyed to the Paraclet. There my daughters, or rather my sisters in Christ, turning their eyes often to my tomb, will more strongly be excited to petition heaven for me. And, indeed, to a mind penetrated with grief, and stricken by the dark view of its crimes, where can be found a resting-place, at once so safe, and so full of hope, as that which, in a peculiar manner, is dedicated to, and bears the name of, the Paraclet, that is, the Comforter? Besides, I know not where a Christian could find a better grave, than in the society of holy women, consecrated to God. They, as the Gospel tells us, attended the interment of their divine master, they embalmed his body with precious perfumes, they followed him to the monument, and there they watched in anxious solicitude. In return,

they

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Quod si me Dominus in manibus inimicorum tradiderit, scilicet ut ipsi prævalentes me interficiant, aut quocunque casu viam universæ carnis absens a vobis ingrediar : cadaver obsecro nostrum, ubicunque vel sepultum, vel expositum jacuerit, ad Cimiterium vestrum deferri faciatis, ubi filiæ nostræ, imo in Christo sorores, sepulchrum nostrum sæpius videntes, ad preces pro me Domino fundendas amplius invitentur. Nullum quippelocum animæ dolenti, de peccatorum suorum errore desolatæ, tutiorem ac salubriorem arbitror, quam eum qui vero Paracleto, id est consolatori proprie consecratus est, & de ejus nomine specialiter insignitus. Nec Christianæ sepulturæ locum rectius apud aliquos fideles, quam apud fœminas in Christo devotas consistere censeo. Quæ de Domini Jesu Christi sepultura sollicitæ, eam unguentis præciosis, & prævenerunt & subsecutæ sunt, & circa ejus sepulchrum studiose vigilantes, et sponi mortem lachrimabiliter plangentes, sicut scriptum est, “ Mulieres “ sedentes ad monumentum lamentabantur flentes Dominum.” Primo ibidem

de

they were consoled with the first angelic apparition, announcing his resurrection, and many subsequent favours were conferred upon them. To conclude, it is my most earnest request that the sollicitude you now too strongly feel for the preservation of my life, you will then extend to the repose of my soul. Carry into my grave the same degree of love you shewed me when alive, that is, never forget to petition heaven for me in your prayers.—Heloisa, live and farewell!—Farewell, my sisters : live, but let it be in Christ!—Remember Abeillard!

LETTER

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de resurrectione ejus Angelica apparitione & allocutione sunt consolatae, & statim ipsius de resurrectionis gaudia, eo bis eis apparente, percipere meruerunt & manibus contrectare.

Illud autem demum super omnia postulo, ut qua nunc de corporis mei periculo nimia sollicitudine laboratis, tunc præcipue de salute animæ sollicitæ, quantum dilexeritis vivum exhibeatis defuncto, orationum videlicet vestrarum speciali quodam & proprio suffragio. Vive, vale, vivantque tuæ, valeantque sorores. Vivite, sed Christo quæso mei memores.

## LETTER III.

## HELOISA TO ABEILLARD.

**I** AM surprised, my dearest Abeillard, that, contrary to the usual stile of epistolary correspondence, and even contrary to the obvious order of things, you would presume, in the very front of your salutation, to put my name before your own. It was preferring a woman to a man, a wife to her husband, a nun to a monk and a priest, and a deaconness to an abbot.—Decency and good order require that, when we write to our superiors or our equals, the names of those to whom we write, should have the first place. But in writing to inferiors, they are first mentioned who are first in dignity.

It was also to us a subject of much astonishment that, at the moment we expected consolation from you, then was  
our

## EPISTOLA II.

## HELOISSÆ.

*Unico suo post Christum, Unica sua in Christo.*

**M I R O R** (Unice meus) quod, præter consuetudinem Epistolarum, imo contra ipsum ordinem naturalem rerum, in ipsa fronte salutationis Epistolaris me tibi præponere præsumpsisti: fœminam videlicet viro, uxorem marito, ancillam Domino, Monialem Monacho & Sacerdoti, Diaconissam Abbati. Rectus quippe ordo est & honestus, ut qui ad superiores vel ad pares scribunt, eorum quibus scribunt nomina suis anteponant. Sin autem ad inferiores, præcedunt scriptionis ordine qui præcedunt rerum dignitate.

Illud etiam non parva admiratione suscepimus, quod quibus consolationis remedium afferre debuisti, desolationem auxisti; & quas mitigare debueras, excitasti.

our sorrow to be augmented. You should have dried our tears; but you rather chose to make them flow in larger streams. For which of us with dry eyes could read those concluding words of your letter: "But if, by the permission of heaven, my enemies should so far prevail as to take away my life?" &c. Oh, Abeillard! how could your mind suggest such ideas; how could your hand write them? No, no; God cannot so far forsake his servants, as to perpetuate our lives, when you are gone. He will not give us that kind of existence, which is ten times worse than death. It belongs to you to celebrate our obsequies, and to commend our souls to God. It is you who assembled here, in his name: you must first dispose of us; then, no longer anxious on our account, and more secure of our salvation, you may follow us with more alacrity.

In future, do, Sir, be more guarded in your expressions. Already, alas! we are wretched enough. Why should you make us more so; why, before the hour, deprive us of that poor life we drag along with difficulty? Each day is sufficiently

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excitasti lachrymas. Quæ enim nostrum ficcis oculis audire possit, quod circasinem Epistolæ posuisti dicens, "Quod si me Dominus in manus inimicorum tradiderit, ut me scilicet prævalentes interficiant, &c." O charissime, quo id animo cogitasti, quo id ore dicere sustinuisti? Nunquam ancillulas suas adeo Deus obliviscatur, ut eas tibi superstites reservet. Nunquam nobis vitam illam concedat, quæ omni genere mortis sit gravior. Te nostras exequias celebrare, te nostras Deo animas convenit commendare, & quas Deo aggregasti, ad ipsum præmittere; ut nulla amplius de ipsis perturberis sollicitudine, & tanto lætior nos subsequaris, quanto securior de nostræ salute jam fueris.

Parce obsecro, Domine, parce hujusmodi dictis, quibus miseras miserrimas facias; & ut ipsum quodcunque vivimus ne nobis auferas ante mortem. Sufficit

ently loaded with its own misery; and that last fatal one, covered with a robe of bitterness, will bring to each of us, an ample share of sorrow. "Why then, says Seneca, should we run in quest of evils, and die before our day?"

You request, should your death happen, while absent from us, that your body be conveyed to the Paraclet: For thus you think, with your image ever before us, to derive greater benefit from our prayers. Do you then imagine we can ever forget you? Or will that be a season for prayer, when general consternation shall have banished every tranquil thought: when reason will have lost its sway; and the tongue its utterance: when the mind, in frantic rage, rebelling against its maker, will not seek to pacify him by supplications, but rather to provoke his anger by complaints? On that sad day our sole occupation will be to weep, but not to pray. We shall follow you: we shall run into the grave with you. How then are we to perform your last melancholy rites? With you having lost the support

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*diei malitia sua, & dies illa omnibus, quos inveniet, fatis secum sollicitudinis afferet omni amaritudine involuta. "Quid enim necesse est, inquit Seneca, mala arcessere, & ante mortem vitam perdere?"*

*Rogas, unice, ut quocunque casu nobis absens hanc vitam finieris, ad Cimiterium nostrum corpus tuum adferri faciamus: ut orationum scilicet nostrarum ex assidua tui memoria ampliorum assequaris fructum. At vero quomodo memoriam tui à nobis labi posse suspicaris? Aut quod orationi tempus tunc erit commodum, quando summa perturbatio nihil permittet quietum? cum nec anima rationis sensum, nec lingua sermonis retinebit usum? Cum mens insana in ipsum, ut ita dicam, Deum magis irata quam pacata, non tam orationibus ipsum placabit quam querimoniis irritabit? Flere tunc miseris tantum vacabit, non orare licebit, & te magis subsequi quam sepelire maturandum erit, ut potius & nos consepeliendæ simus quam sepelire possimus. Quæ cum in*

port of our lives, what will remain for us but death? God grant that day may be our last!—If the sole mention of your death thus strikes us to the heart; what will not the reality do? It is our prayer to heaven, that we may not survive you; that we may never have to perform that office, which we expect from your hands.

Again let me entreat you to be more considerate for the sake of us all: at least, on my account, do refrain from all expressions which, like the shafts of death, penetrate my soul.—The mind, worn down by grief is a stranger to repose: plunged in troubles it is little able to think on God. To him you have devoted our lives; and will you impede his service? It were to be wished that every necessary event, which brings sorrow with it, might take place when least expected: for what cannot be avoided by human fore-  
fight

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*in te nostram amiserimus vitam vivere te recedente nequaquam poterimus. Atque utinam nec tunc usque possimus! Mortis tuæ mentio mors quædam nobis est. Ipsa autem mortis hujus veritas quid, si nos inveniret, futura est? Nunquam Deus annuat, ut hoc tibi debitum supersites persolvamus, ut hoc tibi patrocinio subveniamus, quod à te penitus expectamus. In hoc utinam te præcessuræ, non secuturæ.*

*Parce itaque obsecro nobis, parce itaque unicæ saltem tuæ, hujusmodi scilicet superfedendo verbis, quibus, tanquam gladiis mortis, nostras transverberas animas: ut quod mortem prævenit ipsa morte gravius sit.—Confectus mœrore animus quietus non est, nec Deo sincere potest vacare mens perturbationibus occupata. Noli, obsecro, divinum impedire servitium, cui nos maxime mancipasti. Omne inevitabile, quod cum acciderit, mœrorem maximum secum inferet, ut subito veniat optandum est; ne timore inutili diu ante cruciet, cui  
nulla*

fight, when permitted to torment us, only raises unavailing fears. Full of this thought the poet Lucan thus petitions heaven :

Sit fubitum quodcunque paras ; sit cæce futuri  
Mens hominum fati : liceat sperare timenti !

But if I lose you, what have I to hope for ! you are my only comfort ; deprived of that, shall I still drag on my miserable pilgrimage ? But even in you, what comfort have I, save only the thought, that you are still living ? All other joys are forbidden to me. I may not be allowed to see you, that my soul might sometimes, at least, return into its own bosom.

May I be permitted to say that heaven has never ceased to be my relentless persecutor ? If you call it clemency, where is cruelty to be found ? Fortune, that savage destiny, has spent against me, every arrow of her rage. She has  
none

nulla succurri providentia potest. Quod & Poeta bene considerans Deum precatur dicens :

Sit fubitum quodcunque paras, sit cæce futuri  
Mens hominum fati. Liceat sperare timenti.

LUCAN.

Quid autem te admissio sperandum mihi superest ? aut quæ in hac peregrinatione causa remanendi, ubi nullum nisi te remedium habeam, & nullum aliud in te nisi hoc ipsum, quod vivis : omnibus de te mihi aliis voluptatibus interdictis, cui nec præsentia tua concessum est frui, ut quandoque mihi reddi valeam ?

O, si fas sit dici, crudelem mihi per omnia Deum ! O inclementem clementiam ! O infortunatam fortunam ! quæ jam in me universi conaminis fui tela in tantum consumpsit, ut quibus in alios sæviat jam non habeat ! Plenam in  
me



none left to throw at others: Her quiver was full, and she exhausted it on me. Mortals have no longer cause to dread her. Nor if there were a shaft left, would it find in Heloisa a spot to light on. But, though bleeding at every pore, my enemy does not stay her persecuting hand. She suspends the last fatal stroke, and only fears lest my wounds prove mortal. Of all the wretched I am the most forlorn and wretched! Preferred by you to the rest of my sex, I rose to the most exalted dignity. Thrown down from thence, my fate has been proportionably hard. He who falls from the greatest height, falls with the greatest risk. Where was the woman of birth or power that fortune would have dared to compare with me? In the possession of you my glory was unrivalled; so is my disgrace in your privation. In prosperity and in adversity my life has known no measure. My happiness was unbounded; so is my affliction. Hanging over my melancholy state, I shed the more tears, when I view the magnitude of my losses; but my tears redouble, when

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me pharetram exhaustit, ut frustra jam alii bella ejus formident. Nec si ei adhuc telum aliquod superesset, locum in me vulneris inveniret. Unum inter tot vulnera metuit, ne morte supplicia finiam. Et cum interimere non cesset, interitum tamen quem accelerat, timet. O me miserarum miserrimam! infelicitium infelicissimam, quæ quanto universis in te feminis prælata sublimiorem obtinui gradum, tanto hinc prostrata graviorem in te & in me pariter perpeffum casum! Quanto quippe altior ascendens gradus, tanto gravior corrue-tis casus. Quam mihi nobilium ac potentium fœminarum fortuna unquam præponere potuit aut æquare? Quam denique adeo dejecit & dolore conficere potuit? Quam in te mihi gloriam contulit? Quam in te mihi ruinam intulit? Quam mihi vehemens in utramque partem extitit, ut nec in bonis nec in malis modum habuerit? Quæ, ut me miserrimam omnium faceret, omnibus ante beatiorem effecerat. Ut cum quanta perdidici pensarem, tanto me majora consumerent

when recollection tells me, how dear those pleasures were which I have lost. To the greatest joys have succeeded the greatest sorrows.

And that my condition, it seems, might be absolutely desperate, even the common rules of equity have been perverted in our regard. For while we pursued illicit pleasures, divine justice was indulgent to us. No sooner was this reformed, and the holy bond of marriage united us, than the hand of God became heavy on us.

Having lowered yourself to raise me, and thus given dignity to me and all my family, what more could be required? All guilt was cancelled before God and man.—Why was I born to be the occasion of so black a perfidy! But such has  
 ever

confunderent lamenta, quanto me majora opprefferant damna: & tanto major amifforum succederet dolor, quanto major poffefforum præcefferat amor, & fumma voluptatis gaudia fumma mœroris terminaret triftitia.

Et ut ex injuria major indignatio furgeret, omnia in nobis æquitatis jura pariter sunt perverfa. Dum enim folliciti amoris gaudiis frueremur, & ut turpiore, fed expreffiore vocabulo utar, fornicationi vacaremus, divina nobis feveritas pepercit. Ut autem illicita licitis correximus, & honore conjugii turpitudinem fornicationis operuimus, ira Domini manum fuam super nos vehementer aggravavit, & immaculatum non pertulit thorum, qui diu ante fufinuera pollutum.

Deprehenfis in quovis adulterio viris hæc fatis effet ad vindictam pœna quam pertulifti. Quod ex adulterio promerentur alii, id tu ex conjugio incurrifti; per quod jam te omnibus fatisfeciffæ confidebas injuriis. Quod fornicatoribus fuis adulteræ, hoc propria uxor tibi contulit. Nec cum priftinis vacaremus voluptatibus, fed cum jam ad tempus fegegati caftius viveremus, te quidem [Parifiis Scholis præfidente, & me ad imperium tuum Argenteoli cum Sanctimonialibus converfante. Divifis itaque fic nobis ad invicem ut tu ftudiofius Scholis, ego liberius orationi five facræ lectionis meditationi vacarem; & tanto  
 nobis

ever been the baneful influence of women on the greatest men. Hence the caution of the wise man against us. (*Prov.* 7. 24.)

Eve, our first mother, drove her husband from paradise. Heaven gave her to be his helpmate, but soon she became his destruction.—Delila was alone strong enough to vanquish that brave Nazarean, whose birth an angel had foretold. She delivered him to his enemies. When deprived of fight he was no longer able to support the load of misery, involved in one common ruin he expired with his enemies.—Salomon, the wisest of men, was so infatuated by a woman

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nobis sanctius quanto castius de gentibus, solus in corpore luisti quod duo pariter commiseramus. Solus in pœna fuisti, duo in culpa: & qui minus debueras, totum pertulisti.

Quanto enim amplius te pro me humiliando satisfeceras, & me pariter & totum genus meum sublimaveras; tanto te minus tam apud Deum, quam apud illos proditores, obnoxium pœnæ reddideras. O me miseram in tanti sceleris causa progenitam! O summam in viros summos & consuetam fœminarum perniciem! Hinc de muliere cavenda scriptum est in Proverbiis: “ Nunc ergo, fili, audi me, & attende verbis oris mei. Ne abstrahatur in viis illius mens tua, neq; decipiaris semitis ejus. Multos enim vulneratos dejecit, & fortissimi quique interfecti sunt ab ea. Viæ inferi domus ejus penetrantes in inferiora mortis.” Et in Ecclesiaste. “ Lustravi universa animo meo, & inveni amariorem morte mulierem, quæ laqueus venatorum est, & fagina cor ejus. Vincula enim sunt manus ejus. Qui placet Deo, effugiet eam. Qui autem peccator est, capietur ab illa.”

Prima statim mulier de Paradiso virum captivavit, & quæ ei à Domino creata fuerat in auxilium, in summum ei conversa est exitium. Fortissimum illum Nazarenum Domini, & Angelo nunciante conceptum, Dalila sola superavit, & eum inimicis proditum & oculis privatum ad hoc tandem dolor compulit, ut se pariter cum ruina hostium opprimeret. Sapientissimum omnium Salomonem, sola quam sibi copulaverat mulier infatuavit, & in tantam compulit insaniam,

woman, the daughter of the king of Egypt, as even, in the decline of life, to become an idolater. In preference to his father, who was a just man, he had been chosen to build a temple to the Lord: that Lord he had publicly announced by word and in writing, and he had taught his worship; but that worship he deserted.—Job, that man of piety, had to endure the severest of all his conflicts from his wife. She instigated him to curse God. The arch-tempter well knew what experience had often taught him, that the most compendious way to destroy a husband, was to employ the artifice of his wife.

His usual malice he tried also upon us. He had failed in his attempt while our union was unlawful; therefore he had recourse to matrimony. He was not permitted, from our evil conduct, to work our ruin; but he drew it from a source which was holy.

One consolation I have, however, and I thank heaven for it, that, like the women I mentioned, I had no share in the crime that was committed. An occasion of it, indeed, I was; but

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*ut eum quem ad ædificandum sibi Dominus templum elegerat, patre ejus David, qui justus fuerat, in hoc reprobato, ad idololatriam ipsa usque in finem vitæ dejiceret; ipso quem tam verbis quam scriptis prædicabat atque docebat, divino cultu derelicto. Job sanctissimus in uxore novissimam atque gravissimam sustinuit pugnam, quæ eum ad maledicendum Deo stimulabat. Et callidissimus temptator hoc optime noverat, quod sæpius expertus fuerat; virorum videlicet ruinam in uxoribus esse facillimam.*

*Qui denique etiam usque ad nos consuetam extendens malitiam, quem de fornicatione sternere non potuit, de conjugio temptavit: & bono male est usus, qui malo male uti non est permissus.*

*Deo saltem super hoc gratias, quod me ille, ut supra-positas fœminas, in culpam ex consensu non traxit; quam tamen in causam commissæ malitiæ ex effectū*

but my mind did not co-operate. Yet, alas ! though in this sense, unconscious of any guilt ; do I know that my many antecedent sins were not the cause ? Here I may be criminal. Long had I lived in the indulgence of my passions : and thereby I justly merited what I suffer. To such evil beginnings must be ascribed so disastrous an event. God grant me strength to do ample penance for the crimes that have been committed ! May my sorrow, lengthened out to many days, bear some proportion to what you have suffered ! It is but just, and to it I consign my life. Thus, should not heaven be pacified, to Abeillard at least I shall have made some atonement.

I will disclose to you all the secret weaknesses of my unhappy heart. Tell me then : can I hope to appease the divine anger ; I, who, at every moment, am charging heaven with cruelty ? My murmurs may draw on me greater vengeance : the sorrow, at least, of such a penitent will  
not

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*effectū convertit. Sed & si purget animum meum innocentia, nec hujus reatum sceleris consensus incurrat : peccata tamen multa præcesserunt, quæ me penitus immunem ab hujus reatu sceleris esse non sinunt. Quod videlicet diu ante carnalium illecebrarum voluptatibus serviens, ipsa tunc merui quod nunc plector, & præcedentium in me peccatorum sequentia merito facta sunt poena. Etiam malis initiis perversus imputandus est exitus. Atque utinam hujus præcipuæ commissi dignam agere valeam poenitentiam, ut poena illi tuæ vulneris illati ex longa saltem poenitentiae contritione vicem quoque modo recompensare queam : & quod tu ad horam in corpore pertulisti, ego in omni vita, ut justum est, in contritione mentis suscipiam, & hoc tibi saltem modo, si non Deo, satisfaciam.*

*Si enim vere miserrimi mei animi profitear infirmitatem, qua poenitentia Deum placare valeam non invenio, quem super hac semper injuria, summæ crudelitatis arguo ; & ejus dispensationi contraria, magis eum ex indig-*

not avert it. But why do I talk of penitence? While the mind retains all its former attachments to sin; what avails the external language of grief? It is, indeed, easy to confess one's faults; it is easy to put on the imposing garb of penitence: but, Oh God! how hard it is to tear the mind from those affections, which were once so dear! For this reason, when the holy Job had said; "I will loosen my tongue to speak against myself," that is, I will accuse myself of my faults; I will confess my sins; he immediately adds: "I will speak in the bitterness of my soul." These words the blessed Gregory has expounded: "There are many, says he, who readily  
 " acknowledge their faults; but they know not what it is to  
 " grieve: what should be a subject of tears they relate with  
 " a face of joy." He therefore who, in real detestation, declares his sins, must do it in the bitterness of his heart: his compunction must at once punish what his tongue is made to utter.

How.

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natione offendo, quam ex poenitentiae satisfactione mitigo. Quomodo etiam poenitentia peccatorum dicitur, quatacunque sit corporis afflictio, si mens adhuc ipsam peccandi retinet voluntatem, & pristinis aestuat desideriis? Facile quidem est quemlibet, confitendo peccata seipsum accusare, aut etiam in exteriori satisfactione corpus affligere. Difficillimum vero est à desideriis maximarum voluptatum avellere animum: Unde & merito sanctus Job cum præmisset; "Dimittam adversum me eloquium meum," id est laxabo linguam, & aperiam os per confessionem in peccatorum meorum accusationem: statim adjunxit, "Loquar in amaritudine animæ meæ." Quod Beatus exponens Gregorius, "Sunt, inquit, nonnulli, qui apertis vocibus culpas fatentur, sed tamen in confessione gemere nesciunt, & lugendæ gaudentes dicunt." Unde qui culpas suas detestans loquitur, restat necesse est ut has in amaritudine animæ loquatur; ut hæc ipsa amaritudo puniat, quicquid lingua per mentis judicium accusat.

Sed

How rare this penitential sorrow is, St. Ambrose has also told us: " I have found more, says he, who have preserved their innocence, than who have recovered it by penitence."—So fascinating were the pleasures we once indulged; the thought of them cannot give me pain, nor can I efface their impression. Wherever I turn my eyes, in all their charms, there are they present to me. Even in my dreams the dear phantoms hover round me.

During the celebration of the august mysteries, when the soul, on the wings of prayer, should rise more pure to heaven; the same importunate ideas haunt my wretched soul: they seize every avenue to my heart. When I should grieve for what is past; I only sigh that the same pleasures return no more. My mind has been too faithful to its impressions: it holds up to the imagination every circumstance of pleasure, and all the scenes of past joys play wantonly before me.

I know

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*Sed hæc quidem amaritudo veræ penitentiae quam rara fit beatus diligenter attendens Ambrosius: " Facilius, inquit, inveni qui innocentiam servaverunt, quam qui poenitentiam egerunt." In tantum vero illæ, quas pariter exercuimus, amantium voluptates dulces mihi fuerunt; ut nec displicere mihi, nec vix à memoria labi possint. Quocunque loco me vertam, semper se oculis meis cum suis ingerunt desideriis. Nec etiam dormienti suis illusionibus parcunt.*

*Inter ipsa Missarum solemnia, ubi purior esse debet oratio, obscena earum voluptatum phantasmata ita sibi penitus miserrimam captivant animam, ut turpitudinibus illis magis quam orationi vacem. Quæ cum ingemiscere debeam de commissis, suspiro potius de amissis. Nec solum quæ egimus, sed loca pariter & tempora, in quibus hæc egimus, ita tecum nostro infixæ sunt animo, ut in ipsis omnia tecum agam, nec dormiens etiam ab his quiescam.*

Nonnunquam

I know, the strong workings of my mind, sometimes even betray themselves on my countenance. I am heard to utter words, which escape unthinkingly from me.—How wretched is my condition! To me surely may be applied those plaintive expressions of the apostle; “miserable mortal that I am, who will free me from this body of death?” Could I but add with truth; “the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

This grace, my dearest Abeillard, you are possessed of: it has been peculiarly indulgent to you. Even the very circumstance, which we consider as an instance of great severity, does but announce the paternal goodness of God: Like a skilful physician who, to cure his patient, does not spare the knife.—I have to combat the fervour of youth, and that burning flame which, the indulgence of pleasure, has raised within me. My arms are but that poor defence, which weak female nature can supply.

They,

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Nonnunquam & ipso motu corporis, animi mei cogitationes deprehenduntur, nec à verbis temperans improvisis. O vere me miseram, & illa conquestione ingemiscantis animæ dignissimam! “Infelix ego homo! quis me liberabit de corpore mortis hujus?” Utinam & quod sequitur veraciter addere queam! “Gratia Dei per Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum.”

Hæc te gratia, charissime, prævenit, & ab his tibi stimulis, una corporis plaga medendo, multas in anima sanavit; & in quo tibi amplius adversari Deus creditur, propitior invenitur. More quidem fidelissimi medici, qui non parcat dolori, ut consulat salutem. Hos autem in me stimulos carnis, hæc incentiva libidinis, ipse juvenilis fervor ætatis, & jucundissimarum experientia voluptatum, plurimum accendunt; & tanto amplius sua me impugnatione opprimunt, quanto infirmior est natura, quam oppugnant.

Castam



They, who cannot look into my soul, think me virtuous : they think me chaste, because my external actions are such ; when surely this amiable virtue only dwells within the mind. The world may praise me ; but before God I am worthless. He is the searcher of hearts, and his eye penetrates into the inmost thoughts.—I am deemed virtuous in an age, when religion too generally wears the cloak of hypocrisy ; when he is most loudly praised, whose actions do not shock the public eye. Indeed, the man, perhaps, may deserve some commendation, even before God, who, whatever be his motive, abstains from those practices, which are a scandal to the church, which expose the name of God to the blaspheming tongues of the wicked, and by which wordlings are induced to ridicule the sacred institutes of religion. This is, at least, a small effect of divine grace, from which proceeds not only the power to do good, but also that of abstaining from doing evil. Yet, after all, what avails the latter without the former ? It is written ;

“ decline

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*Castam me prædicant, qui non deprehenderunt hypocritam. Munditiam carnis conferunt in virtutem, cum non sit corporis, sed animi virtus. Aliquid laudis apud homines habens, nihil apud Deum mereor, qui cordis & renum probator est, & in abscondito videt. Religiosa hoc tempore judicor, in quo jam parva pars religionis non est hypocrisis ; ubi ille maximis extollitur laudibus, qui humanum non offendit judicium. Et hoc fortassis aliquo modo laudabile, & Deo acceptabile quoquo modo videtur, si quis videlicet exterioris operis exemplo, quacunque intentione, non sit Ecclesiæ scandalo, nec jam per ipsum apud infideles nomen Domini blasphemetur, nec apud carnales professionis suæ ordo infametur. Atque hoc quoque nonnullum est divinæ gratiæ donum, ex cujus videlicet munere venit non solum bona facere, sed etiam à malis abstinere. Sed frustra istud præcedit, ubi illud non succedit, sicut scriptum.*

“decline from evil, and do good.” And even both can have no pretension to a reward, unless they be done from the motive of pleasing God.

Through the whole course of my life, heaven knows what have been my dispositions! It was you, and not God, whom I feared most to offend; you, and not God, I was most anxious to please. My mind is still unaltered. It was not love of him, but solely your command, that drew me to the cloister. How miserable then my condition, if, undergoing so much, I have no prospect of a reward hereafter! By external shew, you, like others, have been deceived; you ascribed to the impressions of religion what sprang from another source. Thus you recommend yourself to my prayers, in hopes of finding that succour, which I look for from you.

Do not, I pray, place that false confidence in me, which will make me lose the assistance I want. If you think me in health, you will apply no medicines; if in affluence, your hand will not be open to relieve me; and if strong, alas! I shall

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scriptum est: “Declina à malo, & fac bonum.” Et frustra utrumque geritur quod amore Dei non agitur.

In omni autem (Deus scit) vitæ meæ statu, te magis adhuc offendere, quam Deum vereor: tibi placere amplius quam ipsi appeto. Tua me ad religionis habitum jussio, non divina traxit dilectio. Vide quam infelicem, & omnibus miserabiliorem ducam vitam, si tanta hic frustra sustineo: nihil habitura remunerationis in futuro. Diu te, sicut multos, simulatio mea fefellit, ut religioni deputares hypochrisin: & ideo nostris te maxime commendans orationibus, quod à te expecto, a me postulas.

Noli, obsecro, de me tanta præsumere, ne mihi cesses orando subvenire. Noli æstimare sanam, ne medicaminis subtrahas gratiam. Noli non egentem credere, ne differas in necessitate subvenire. Noli validam putare, ne prius corruiam

shall fall before you can run in to support me. Undeserved praise has been the ruin of many. It puts us off our guard at the moment caution is most necessary.

If you be an enemy to flattery, and a friend to truth, let me then entreat you to cease from praising me. If you think I possess any thing commendable, do not you, at least, raise the wind of vanity, which may dissipate it at a blast. Would he be thought an able physician, who, from external symptoms, should pretend to determine the nature of an internal complaint? Things which are common to the faint and the sinner have no merit in the sight of God. Such are all outward practices, to which the hypocrite more sedulously adheres, than the greatest saint.

The heart of man is depraved. It is impenetrable to human sight: who yet has fathomed it? And there are ways which seem to us straight, the ends of which lead to death.

Where

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corruam quam sustentes labentem. Multis ficta sui laus nocuit, & præsidium quo indigebant, abstulit. Per Efsaiam Dominus clamat, "Popule meus, qui te beatificant ipsi te decipiunt, & viam gressuum tuorum dissipant." Et per Ezechielem, "Væ qui consuitis, inquit, pulvillos sub omni cubitu manus, & cervicalia sub capite ætatis universæ ad decipiendas animas." E contra autem per Salomonem dicitur, "Verba sapientum quasi stimuli, & quasi clavi in altum defixi, qui videlicet vulnera nesciunt palpare, sedungere."

Quiesce obsecro à laude mea, ne turpem adulationis notam & mendacii crimen incurras: aut si quod in me suspicaris bonum, ipsum laudatum vanitatis aura ventilet. Nemo medicinæ peritus interiorem morbum ex exterioris habitus inspectione dijudicat. Nulla, quicquid meriti apud Deum obtinent, quæ reprobis æq; ut electis communia sunt. Hæc autem ea sunt, quæ exterius aguntur, quæ nulli Sanctorum tam studiose peragunt, quantum hypocritæ.

Pravum est cor hominis, & inscrutabile etiam: quis cognoscet illud? Et sunt viæ hominis quæ videntur rectæ: novissima autem illius deducunt ad mortem.

Where God has reserved judgment to himself, it is rash in man to pronounce. For which reason the wise man says; “praise no one, whilst he lives:” give not commendation at a time, when the very act of doing it, may make him undeserving of it.

To me your praises bring the greatest delight; but therefore is their impression more dangerous. The anxious desire I have to please you gives them a thousand charms. Yet I would rather you should tremble for me, than show too much confidence. Fear will make you solicitous to assist me; and in my present state, heaven knows what cause I have to tremble!

Do not tell me, in your exhortations to a virtuous life, that “virtue is perfected in weakness,” and that “he only shall be crowned, who has stoutly contended.” I look for no laurels, no crown of victory. It is enough for me to keep out of the way of danger. I like not the perils of war. If God will but give me the lowest place in heaven, I shall be  
 amply

*Temerarium est in eo judicium hominis, quod divino tantum reservatur examini. Unde & scriptum est: “Ne laudaveris hominem in vita.” Ne tunc videlicet hominem laudes, dum laudando facere non laudabilem potes.*

*Tanto autem mihi tua laus in me periculosior est, quanto gratior: & tanto amplius ea capior & delector, quanto amplius tibi per omnia placere studeo. Time obsecro semper de me potius quam confidas, ut tua semper sollicitudine adjuver. Nunc vero præcipue timendum est, ubi nullum incontinentiæ meæ superest in te remedium.*

*Nolo me ad virtutem exhortans, & ad pugnam provocans, dicas: “Nam virtus in infirmitate perficitur: & non coronabitur nisi qui legitime certaverit.” Non quero coronam victoriæ. Satis est mihi periculum evitare. Tutius evitatur periculum, quam committitur bellum. Quocunque me angulo.*

amply satisfied. There, indeed, jealousy is not known, where each one is pleased with his allotment of happiness.

If these sentiments be not your's, I will confirm them by the authority of St. Jerom: "I, says he, fairly confess my weakness: I do not wish to fight in hopes of victory, lest I be defeated." How foolish is it to abandon what is certain, and run after an uncertainty which we may never find.—Farewel.

LETTER IV.

ABEILLARD TO HELOISA.

THE complaints, you urge against me, in your last letter, may be reduced to four heads.—That in the salutation of my letter I put your name before my own—That, in lieu of administering comfort, I had added to  
your

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angulo cœli Deus collocet, fatis mihi faciet. Nullus ibi cuiquam invidet, cum singulis quod habebunt suffecerit.

Cui quidem consilio nostro, ut ex autoritate quoque robur adjungam, Beatum audiamus Hieronymum: "Fateor imbecillitatem meam, nolo spe victoriæ pugnare, ne perdam aliquando victoriam." Quid necesse est certa dimittere, & incerta sectari?

EPISTOLA II.

ABÆLARDI.

*Sponsæ Christi, Servus ejusdem.*

IN quatuor, memini, circa quæ Epistolæ tuæ novissimæ summa consistit, offensæ tuæ commotionem expressisti. Primo quidem super hoc conquereris, quod præter consuetudinem Epistolarum, imo etiam contra ipsum naturalem

your grief, by my expressions—That my praises are dangerous to you ; while to oppose them you accuse yourself, and entreat me not to repeat them—And lastly, you subjoined your tiresome and never-ending murmurs against providence.

To these I will reply, not so much in my own defence, as for your instruction and advice. When you know that my requests are reasonable, you will be more disposed to comply with them; and when you find that I am not reprehensible in what regards myself, you will think me more just in your own concerns; and not again undervalue my admonitions.

I.—With regard to what you stile the preposterous order of my address, a little attention will shew you, that, in so doing, I conformed to your own idea. You say that, when

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ordinem rerum, Epistola nostra tibi directa te mihi in salutatione præposuit. Secundo, quod cum vobis consolationis potius remedium afferre debuissim, desolationem auxi, & quas mitigare debueram lachrymas, excitavi. Illud videlicet ibidem adjungens, “ Quod si me Dominus in manus inimicorum tradiderit, ut me scilicet prævalentes interficiant,” &c. Tertio vero veterem illam & assiduam querelam tuam in Deum adjecisti, de modo videlicet nostræ conversionis ad Deum, & crudelitæ proditiōis illius in me commissæ. Denique accusationem tui contra nostram in te laudem opposuisti, non cum supplicatione modica, ne id deinceps præsumerem.

Quibus quidem singulis rescribere decrevi, non tam pro excusatione mea, quam pro doctrina vel exhortatione tua; ut eo scilicet libentius petitionibus assentias nostris, quo eas rationabilius factas intellexeris; & tanto me amplius exaudias in tuis, quanto reprehensibilem minus invenies in meis; tantoque amplius verearis contemnere, quanto minus videris dignum reprehensione.

De ipso autem nostræ salutationis, ut dicis, ordine præpostero, juxta tuam quoque, si diligenter attendas, actum est sententiam. Id enim quod omnibus patet,

we write to our superiors, their names should have the first place. You yourself are my superior, since you became the spouse

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patet, tu ipsa indicasti, ut cum videlicet ad superiores scribitur eorum nomina præponantur. Te vero ex tunc me superiorem factam intelligas, quod domina mea esse cœpisti, Domini mei sponsa effecta, juxta illud Beati Hieronimi ad Eustochium ita scribentis: "Hæc idcirco, domina mea Eustochium, scribo. "Dominam quippe debeo vocare sponsam Domini mei." Fœlix talium commercium nuptiarum, ut homunculi miseri prius uxor, nunc in summi Regis thalamis sublimaris. Nec ex hujus honoris privilegio priori tantummodo viro, sed quibuscunque servis ejusdem Regis prælata. Ne mireris igitur si tam vivus quam mortuus me vestris præcipue commendam orationibus; cum jure publico constet apud dominos plus eorum sponfas intercedendo posse, quam ipsorum famulas, dominas amplius quam servos. In quarum quidem typo Regina illa & summi Regis sponsa diligenter describitur, cum in Psalmo dicitur, "Assitit Regina à dextris tuis." Ac si aperte dicatur, ista juncto latere sponso familiarissime adhæret, & pariter incedit, cæteris omnibus quasi à longe abstantibus, vel subsequenteribus.—De hujus excellentia prærogativæ sponsa in Canticis exultans, illa, ut ita dicam, quam Moyses duxit, Æthiopiſſa dicit: "Nigra sum, sed formosa, filiæ Hierusalem. Ideo dilexit me "Rex, & introduxit me in cubiculum suum." Et rursum, "Nolite considerare "quod fusca sum, quia decoloravit me Sol."—In quibus quidem verbis cum generaliter anima describatur contemplativa, quæ specialiter Sponsa Christi dicitur, expressius tamen ad vos hoc pertinere ipse etiam vester exterior habitus loquitur. Ipse quippe cultus exterior nigrorum, aut vilium indumentorum, instar lugubris habitus bonarum viduarum mortuos, quos dilexerant viros, plangentium, vos in hoc mundo, juxta Apostolum, vere viduas, & desolatas ostendit stipendiis Ecclesiæ sustentandas. De quarum etiam viduarum luctu super occisum earum sponsum Scriptura commemorat, dicens: "Mulieres "sedentes ad monumentum lamentabantur flentes Dominum."—Habet autem Æthiopiſſa exteriorem in carne nigredinem, & quantum ad exteriora pertinet, cæteris apparit fœminis deformior: cum non sit tamen in interioribus dispar, sed in plerisque etiam formosior, atque candidior, sicut in ossibus, seu dentibus. Quorum videlicet dentium candor in ipso etiam commendatur

Sponso,

spouse of Christ, as your favourite Jerom has shewn in his letter to Eustochium.—(*The truth of this whimsical assertion he then*

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Sponso, cum dicitur: “ Et dentes ejus lacte candidiores.” Nigra itaque in exterioribus, sed formosa in interioribus est; quia in hac vita crebris adversitatum tribulationibus corporaliter afflicta quasi in carne nigrescit exterius, juxta illud Apostoli: “ Omnes qui volunt pie vivere in Christo tribulationem patientur.” Sicut enim candido prosperum, ita non incongrue nigro designatur adversum. Intus autem, quasi in ossibus, candet, quia in virtutibus ejus anima pollet, sicut scriptum est: “ Omnis gloria ejus filiae Regis ab intus.”—Ossa quippe, quæ interiora sunt, exteriori carne circumdata, & ipsius carnis, quam gerunt, vel sustentant, robur, ac fortitudo sunt, bene animam exprimunt, quæ carnem ipsam, cui inest, vivificat, sustentat, movet, atque regit, atque ei omnem valetudinem ministrat. Cujus quidem est candor, sive decor, ipsæ, quibus adornatur, virtutes.—Nigra quoque est in exterioribus, quia dum in hac peregrinatione adhuc exulat, vilem & abjectam se tenet in hac vita; ut in illa sublimetur, quæ est abscondita cum Christo in Deo, patriam jam adepta.—Sic vero eam sol verus decolorat, quia cælestis amor Sponsi eam sic humiliat, vel tribulationibus cruciat; ne eam scilicet prosperitas extollat. Decolorat eam sic, id est dissimilem eam à cæteris facit, quæ terrenis inhiant, & sæculi quæerunt gloriam; ut sic ipsa vere lilium convallium per humilitatem efficiatur: non lilium quidem montium, sicut illæ videlicet fatuæ virgines, quæ de munditia carnis, vel abstinentia exteriori, apud se intumescences, æstu temptationum aruerunt.—Bene autem filias Hierusalem, id est, imperfectiores alloquens fideles, qui filiarum potius, quam filiorum nomine digni sunt, dicit: “ Nolite me considerare, quod fusca sum, quia decoloravit me Sol.” Ac si apertius dicat: quod sic me humilio, vel tam viriliter adversitates sustineo, non est meæ virtutis; sed ejus gratiæ, cui deservio. Aliter solent hæretici, vel hypocritæ, quantum ad faciem hominum spectat, spe terrenæ gloriæ sese vehementer humiliare, vel multa inutiliter tolerare. De quorum hujusmodi abjectione, vel tribulatione, quam sustinent, vehementer mirandum est; cum sint omnibus miserabilioribus hominibus, qui nec præsentis vitæ bonis, nec futuræ fruuntur.—Hoc itaque Sponsa diligenter considerans dicit: “ Nolite mirari, cur id faciam.” Sed de illis mirandum est, qui inutiliter terrenæ laudis desiderio æstuantēs terrenis se privant commodis, tam hic, quam in futuro



*then attempts to shew by a chain of mystical arguments, which commences in the fourth line of the Latin original, in page 445, and terminates in page 448.)*

II.—And

turo miseri. Qualis quidem fatuarum virginum continentia est, quæ à janua sunt exclusæ.—Bene etiam, quia nigra est, ut diximus, & formosa, dilectam, & introductam se dicit in cubiculum Regis, id est, in secretum, vel quietem contemplationis, & lectulum illum, de quo eadem alibi dicit: “ In lectulo “ meo per noctes quæsiui, quem diligit anima mea.” Ipsa quippe nigredinis deformitas occultum potius quam manifestum, & secretum magis, quam publicum amat. Et quæ talis est uxor, secreta potius viri gaudia, quam manifesta desiderat, & in lecto magis vult sentiri quam in mensa videri.—Et frequenter accidit, ut nigrarum caro fœminarum, quanto est in aspectu deformior, tanto fit in tactu suavior: atque ideo earum voluptas secretis gaudiis, quam publicis gravior sit, & convenientior, & earum viri, ut illis oblectentur, magis eas in cubiculum introducunt, quam ad publicum educunt.—Secundum quam quidem metaphoram bene spiritualis Sponsa cum præmisisset: “ Nigra sum, sed “ formosa,” statim adjunxit: “ Ideo dilexit me Rex, & introduxit me in cubiculum suum,” singula videlicet singulis reddens. Hoc est, quia formosa, dilexit, quia nigra introduxit. Formosa, ut dixi, intus virtutibus, quas diligit Sponsus: nigra exterius corporalium tribulationum adversitatibus.—Quæ quidem nigredo, corporalium scilicet tribulationum, facile fidelium mentes ab amore terrenorum avellit, & ad æternæ vitæ desideria suspendit, & sæpe à tumultuosa sæculi vita trahit ad secretum contemplationis. Sicut in Paulo illo videlicet nostræ, id est, Monachalis vitæ, primordio actum esse Beatus scribit Hieronymus.—Hæc quoque adjectio indumentorum vilium secretum magis, quam publicum appetit, & maxima vilitatis, ac secretioris loci, qui nostræ præcipue convenit professioni, custodienda est. Maxime namque ad publicum procedere pretiosus provocat cultus, quem à nullo appeti, nisi ad inanem gloriam, & sæculi pompam Beatus Gregorius inde convincit: quod nemo his in occulto se ornât, sed ubi conspici queat.—Hoc autem prædictum Sponsæ cubiculum illud est, ad quod ipse Sponsus in Evangelio invitat orantem, dicens: “ Tu autem “ cum oraveris, intra in cubiculum, & clauso ostio, ora Patrem tuum.” Ac si diceret: non in plateis, vel publicis locis, sicut hypocritæ. Cubiculum itaque dicit secretum à tumultibus, & aspectu sæculi locum, ubi quietius & purius orari

II.—And in reply to your second charge, that I afflicted you by mentioning the danger, to which I am exposed, and the death which I fear, recollect that, I did that also, in compliance with your most earnest request. I refer you to the words of your first letter; “For Christ’s sake,” &c. p. 401.

I acquainted

orari possit: qualia sunt scilicet Monasticarum solitudinum secreta, ubi claudere ostium jubemur, id est, aditus omnes obstruere, ne puritas orationis casu aliquo præpediatur, & oculus noster infelicem animam deprædetur.—Cujus quidem consilii, imo præcepti divini multos hujus habitus nostri contemptores adhuc graviter sustinemus, qui cum divina celebrant officia, claustris, vel choris eorum referatis, publicis tam sœminarum quam virorum aspectibus impudenter se ingerunt, & tunc præcipue cum in solemnitatibus pretiosis polluerunt ornamentis, sicut & ipsi, quibus ostentant, sæculares homines. Quorum quidem judicio tanto festivitas habetur celebrior, quanto in exteriori ornatu est ditior, & in epulis copiosior. De quorum quidem cæcitate miserrima, & pauperum Christi religioni penitus contraria, tanto est filere honestius, quanto loqui turpius. Qui penitus Judaizantes consuetudinem suam sequuntur pro regula, & irritum fecerunt mandatum Dei per traditiones suas: non quod debeat, sed quod soleat attendentes. Cum, ut Beatus etiam meminit Augustinus, Dominus dixerit: “Ego sum veritas,” non ego sum consuetudo.—Horum orationibus, quæ aperto scilicet fiunt ostio, qui voluerit, se commendet. Vos autem, quæ in cubiculum cælestis Regis ab ipso introductæ, atque in ejus amplexibus quiescentes, clauso semper ostio, ei totæ vacatis, quanto familiarius ei adhæretis, juxta illud Apostoli, “Qui adhæret Domino, unus spiritus est,” tanto puriorem, & efficaciorē habere confidimus orationem, & ob hoc vehementius earum efflagitamus opem. Quas etiam tanto devotius pro me faciendas esse credimus, quanto majore nos invicem caritate colligati sumus.

Quod vero mentione periculi, in quo laboro, vel mortis quam timeo, vos commovi, juxta ipsam quoque tuam factum est exhortationem, imo etiam adjurationem. Sic enim prima, quam ad me direxisti, quodam loco continet Epistola: “Per ipsum itaque qui te sibi adhuc quoquomodo protegit Christum obsecramus, quatenus ancillulas ipsius, & tuas crebris literis de his, in quibus adhuc fluctuas, naufragiis certificare digneris: ut nos saltem quæ tibi solæ remansimus

I acquainted you of my anxious cares, to which you had conjured me ; and for that I am blamed. While my life is in danger, would it become you rather to rejoice ? Or you would partake of my joys, but not of my sorrows.—Nothing so well distinguishes our true from our false friends, as that the former stand by us in adversity, and the latter are our companions only in prosperity.

Cease therefore, I pray you, from such expressions, and still these useless murmurs, which, indeed, have no affinity with the feelings of friendship. Or if this must not be ; I at least may be permitted, surrounded as I am by perils, to be anxious for my own soul, and to provide, as far as may be, for its welfare.—And how, if you really love me, can you object to this provident circumspection ? Even, had you any confidence in the divine mercy towards me, in proportion

as

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*remanemus doloris vel gaudii participes habeas. Solent enim dolenti nonnullam adferre consolationem qui condolent. Et quodlibet onus pluribus impositum, levius sustinetur, five defertur.*

*Quid igitur arguis, quod vos anxietatis meæ participes feci, ad quod me adjurando compulisti ? Nunquid in tanta vitæ, qua crucior, desperatione gaudere vos convenit ? Nec doloris sociæ, sed gaudii tantum vultis esse : nec flere cum flentibus, sed gaudere cum gaudentibus ? Nulla major, verorum & falsorum differentia est amicorum, quam quod illi adversitati, isti prosperitati se sociant.*

*Quiesce, obsecro, ab his dictis, & hujusmodi querimonias compesce, quæ à visceribus caritatis absistunt longissime. Aut si adhuc in his offenderis, me tamen in tanto periculi positum articulo, & quotidiana desperatione vitæ, de salute animæ sollicitum esse convenit, & de ipsa, dum licet, providere. Nec tu, si me vere diligis, hanc exosam providentiam habebis. Quinetiam si quam de divina erga me misericordia spem haberes, tanto amplius ab hujus vitæ*

as my sufferings appear heavy to you, it would be your wish to see me delivered from them. For you are well convinced that he would be my benefactor, who should put a period to my unhappy life. What then might be my fate, is uncertain ; but I know my present evils.

The termination of misery is itself a happiness ; and they who really feel for others, whatever their own loss may be in the event, cannot but desire to see an end to their labours. The kind mother who beholds her son languishing in pain, looks eagerly to its conclusion ; she cannot support the sight, and she rather wishes his dissolution, than to have a partner in misery. The company of a friend is, indeed, pleasing : but I would sooner see him away, and happy, than have him with me, and miserable. His sufferings, which I cannot remedy, become intolerable to me.

But you, Heloisa, may not even enjoy my wretched company. Why then would you rather see me live in for-

row,

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*ærumnis liberari me cuperes, quanto eas conspicias intolerabiliore. Certum quippe tibi est, quod quisquis ab hac vita me liberet, à maximis pœnis eruet. Quas postea incurram incertum est, sed à quantis absolvar dubium non est.*

*Omnis vita misera jucundum exitum habet, & quicumque aliorum anxietatibus vere compatiuntur & condolent, eas finire desiderant : & cum damnis etiam suis, si quos anxios vident, vere diligunt, nec tam commoda propria quam illorum in ipsis attendunt. Sic diu languentem filium mater etiam morte languorem finire desiderat, quem tolerare ipsa non potest, & eo potius orbari sustinet quam in miseria consortem habere. Et quicumque amici præsentia plurimum oblectatur, magis tamen beatam esse vult ejus absentiam quam præsentiam miseram. Quia quibus subvenire non valet ærumnis, tolerare non potest.*

*Tibi vero nec nostra vel etiam misera concessum est frui præsentia. Nec ubi tuis in me commodis aliquid provideas, cur me miserrime vivere malis quam felicius mori non video. Quod si nostras protendi miseras in commoda tua desideras,*

row, than die and be happy? I do not understand your motives. If, from a continuance of my sufferings, you expect any advantage to yourself; you act the part rather of an enemy, than a friend. The idea, I know, shocks you; let me then hear no more of such complaints.

III.—Your rejection of praise I certainly applaud: thereby you shew that you deserve it. It is written: “he that humbles himself shall be exalted.” Your heart and hand, I trust, have gone together. If so, your humility is sincere: and my words will not injure it. But take care, I beg, lest in seeming to avoid praise, you seek it more, and your mind give the lie to your tongue. You know the sentiment of Jerom on this subject; and give me leave to bring to your recollection the artful Galatea of Virgil. She ran from her lover, that he might follow her; and before she hid herself, she wished to be seen:

Et fugit ad falices, & se cupit ante videri.

So

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desideras, hostis potius, quam amica convinceris. Quod si videri refugis, ab his obsecro, sicut dixi, quiesce querimoniis.

Approbo autem, quod reprobas, laudem; quia in hoc ipso te laudabiliorem ostendis. Scriptum est enim: “Justus in primordio accusator est sui: & qui se humiliat se exaltat.” Atque utinam sic fit in animo tuo sicut in scripto! Quod si fuerit, vera est humilitas tua, ne pro nostris evanuerit verbis. Sed vide obsecro ne hoc ipso laudem quæras quo laudem fugere videris, & reprobes illud ore quod appetas corde. De quo ad Eustochium virginem sic inter cætera Beatus scribit Hyeronimus: “Naturali ducimur malo. Adulatoribus nostris libenter favemus, & quamquam nos respondemus amos indignos, & calidior rubor ora suffundat, attamen ad laudem suam intrinsecus anima lætatur.” Talem & lascivæ calliditatem Galathea Virgilius describit, quæ quod volebat fugiendo appetebat, & simulatione repulsæ amplius in se amantem incitabat: “Et fugit ad falices,” inquit, “& se cupit

So we also sometimes strive to excite the greater admiration, by seeming to withdraw from it. We decline the regard of the world, and we draw it after us. It is an unbecoming artifice.

I speak of general characters. Of you I have no suspicion, nor do I doubt your sincerity. Still let me advise you to be more guarded in your language. They who know you less may perhaps think, you are but asking for greater praise. My commendations, believe me, will never make you vain; but they may stimulate you to better exertions: and the more you desire to please me, the more ardently will you strive to execute my injunctions. If I praise the excellency of your religious deportment, it is not that you should glory in it. And observe that, as the censure of an enemy is not to have much weight, so should not a friend's praise be too confidently relied on.

IV.—It

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“ante videri.” Antequam lateat cupit se fugientem videri, ut ipsa fuga, qua reprobare confortium juvenis videtur, amplius acquirat. Sic & laudes hominum dum fugere videmur, amplius erga nos excitamus, & cum latere nos velle simulamus, ne quis scilicet in nobis, quid laudet, agnoscat, amplius attendimus in laudem nostram impudentes, quia eo laude videmur digniores.

Et hæc quidem, quæ sæpe accidunt, dicimus, non quia de te talia suspicemur, qui de tua non hæsitamus humilitate. Sed ab his etiam verbis te temperare volumus, ne his qui te minus noverint, videaris, ut ait Hieronymus, fugiendo gloriam querere. Nunquam te mea laus inflabit, sed ad meliora provocabit, et tanto studiosius quæ laudavero amplecteris, quanto mihi amplius placere satagis. Non est laus nostra testimonium tibi religionis, ut hinc aliquid extollentiae sumas. Nec de commendatione cujusquam amicis credendum est, sicut nec inimicis de vituperatione.

Superest

IV.—It remains that I examine more minutely what has long been the subject of your incessant complaints, I mean the circumstance, which drew us from the world. Here you accuse the ways of providence, when it would be more equitable to extoll them. I had thought, indeed, that long ago, by the peculiar grace of heaven, this bitterness had been erased from your mind. The more dangerous it is, at once threatening the ruin of your soul and body, the more it calls for pity, and the more it gives me pain. You declare that, your only wish is to please me: quit then these baneful thoughts, that you may torment me no longer; that you may make me happy. With them you cannot please me; nor with them can you expect to go along with me to happiness hereafter. You have professed a willingness to follow me even to the gates of misery, and will you let me go without you to those of endless joy? Let this, at least, be a motive which may urge you to a religious life. Reflect on the happiness which awaits you there, and on my society,

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Supereſt tandem, ut ad antiquam illam, ut diximus, & aſſiduam querimoniam tuam veniamus, quia videlicet de noſtræ converſionis modo Deum potius accuſare præſumis, quam glorificare, ut juſtum eſt, velis. Hanc jamdudum amaritudinem animi tui tam manifeſto divinæ miſericordiæ conſilio evanuiſſe credideram. Quæ quanto tibi periculoſior eſt, corpus tuum pariter & animam conterens; tanto miſerabilior eſt, & mihi moleſtior. Quæ cum mihi per omnia placere, ſicut proſiteris, ſtudeas, hoc ſaltem uno ut me non crucies, imo ut mihi ſummopere placeas, hanc depone. Cum qua mihi non potes placere, neque mecum ad beatitudinem pervenire. Suſtinebis illuc me ſine te pergere, quem etiam ad Vulcania proſiteris te ſequi velle? Hoc ſaltem uno religionem appetere, ne à me ad Deum, ut credis, properantem dividaris; & tanto libentius quanto quo veniendum nobis eſt beatius eſt; ut tanto ſcilicet ſocietas  
noſtra:

society, which will no more be taken from you; for you do not hesitate to declare that I am in the right way. Recollect what you once said; call to mind the words of your last letter, that, in the manner of our conversion, and in the mode of God's chastisement, heaven had been rather propitious to me. Yes, Heloisa, it was propitious to us both; but the excess of your grief does not admit the language of reason. Lament not that you were the cause of this event; rather be persuaded you were born to be it. I suffered; but it was advantageous to me: do the sufferings of the martyrs also give you pain? Had I justly suffered, could you have borne it more patiently? If so, ignominy would have fallen upon me, and my enemies might have gloried: they would have been just; and I contemptible. Their behaviour would have found no accusers; and who would have pitied me?

To assuage the bitterness of your grief, I could show that all has happened justly, and with a view to our greater good.

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*nostra sit gravior, quanto felicior. Memento quæ dixeris. Recordare quæ scripseris, in hoc videlicet nostræ conversionis modo, quo mihi Deus amplius adversari creditur, propitiorem mihi, sicut manifestum est, extitisse. Hoc uno saltem hæc ejus dispositio tibi placeat, quod mihi sit saluberrima, imo mihi pariter & tibi, si rationem vis doloris admittat. Nec te tanti boni causam esse doleas, ad quod te à deo maxime creatam esse non dubites. Nec quia id tulerim plangas, nisi cum Martyrum passionum, ipsiusque Dominicæ mortis commoda te contristabunt. Nunquid si id mihi juste accidisset, tolerabilius ferres, & minus te offenderet? Profecto si sic fieret, eo modo contingeret quo mihi esset ignominiosius, & inimicis laudabilius; cum illis laudem justitia, & mihi contemptum acquireret culpa. Nec jam quisquam quod actum est accusaret, ut compassione mei moveretur.*

Ut tamen & hoc modo hujus amaritudinem doloris leniamus; tam justè quam utiliter id monstrabimus nobis accidisse, & rectius in conjugatos quam in forni-

tes



good. The ways of Providence are equitable. Revolve in your thoughts the intemperance of our behaviour, even after marriage, when you were at Argenteuil, and I sometimes came to visit you. Need I mention our many antecedent excesses? And how basely had I deceived your uncle, when I lived with him in habits of unbounded confidence? Surely his vengeance was not unmerited.—In punishment of these crimes it was that I have suffered; and to the same cause I ascribe the many evils which, at this hour, surround me. It will be well if divine justice may thus be satisfied.

Call to your recollection another circumstance. When I took you from Paris into Britany, to avoid shame and the fury of your uncle, you disguised yourself in the dress  
of

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cantes ultum Deum fuisse. Nôsti post nostri confœderationem conjugii, cum Argenteoli cum Sanctimoniâlibus in clauſtro converſabaris, me die quadam privatim ad te viſitandam veniſſe, & quid ibi tecum meæ libidinis egerit intemperantia in quadam etiam parte ipſius reſectorii, cum quo alias diverteremus, non haberemus. Nôsti, inquam, id impudentiſſime tunc actum eſſe in tam reverendo loco & ſummæ Virgini conſecrato. Quod, etſi alia ceſſent flagitia, multo graviore dignum fit ultione. Quid priſtinas fornicationes & impudentiſſimas referam pollutiones quæ conjugium præceſſerunt? Quid ſummam denique proditionem meam, qua de te ipſa tuum, cum quo aſſidue in ejus domo vivebam, avunculum tam turpiter ſeduxi? Quis me ab eo juſte prodi non ſenſeat, quem tam impudenter ante ipſe prædideram? Putas ad tantorum criminum ultionem momentaneum illius plagæ dolorem ſufficere? Imo tantis malis tantum debitum eſſe commodum? Quam plagam divinæ ſufficere juſtitiæ credis ad tantam contaminationem, ut diximus, facerrimi loci ſuæ matris? Certe niſi vehementer erro, non tam illa ſaluberrima plaga in ultionem horum converſa eſt, quam quæ hodie indefinenter ſuſtineo.

Nôsti etiam quando te gravidam in meam tranſmiſi patriam, ſacro te habitu indutam, Monialem te finxiſſe, & tali ſimulatione tuæ, quam nunc habes,  
religioni

of a nun, and thus irreverently profaned the holy institute, which you now profess. With what propriety then has the divine justice, rather the divine goodness, compelled you to embrace a state, which you could wantonly ridicule, willing that, in the very habit of a nun, you should expiate the crime committed against it. The truth of reality supplies itself a cure, and corrects your dissimulation.

If we view the advantages also which this justice has produced, you will rather be disposed to admire the kindness of heaven towards us. My dearest Heloisa, do consider, from what perils we were drawn, even when we resisted most the calls of mercy. We were exposed to the most dangerous tempests, and God delivered us. Ever repeat, and with a grateful mind, the wonders of his mercy. The worst sinners may take a lesson from our example; for what may not suppliants expect, when they hear of the favours which were done to us?—Compare together the magnitude of our dangers, and the ease of our deliverance; our inveterate disorders,

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*religioni, irreverenter illulisse. Unde etiam pensa quam convenienter ad hanc te religionem divina justitia, imo gratia traxerit nolentem, cui verita non es illudere, volens ut in ipso luas habitu, quod in ipsum deliquisti, & simulationis mendacio ipsa rei veritas remedium præstet, & falsitatem emendet.*

*Quod si divinæ in nobis justitiæ nostram velis utilitatem adjungere, non tam justitiam, quam gratiam Dei quod tunc egit in nobis poteris appellare. Attende, itaque, attende, charissima, quibus misericordiæ suæ retibus à profundo hujus tam periculosi maris nos Dominus piscaverit, & à quantæ Charibdis voragine naufragos, licet invitos, extraxerit, ut merito uterque nostrum in illam prorumpere posse videatur vocem: “ Dominus sollicitus est mei.” Cogita & recogita, in quantis ipsi nos periculis constituti eramus, & à quantis nos eruerit Dominus: et narra semper cum summa gratiarum actione, quanta fecit Dominus animæ nostræ: et quoslibet iniquos de bonitate Domini desperantes*

disorders, and the gentle remedy; our unworthy conduct, and the benevolence of heaven.—I will then proclaim what the Lord has done for me.

And

rantes nostro consolare exemplo, ut advertant omnes quid supplicantibus atque petentibus fiat, cum tam peccatoribus & invitis tanta præstentur beneficia. Perpende altissimum in nobis divinæ consilium pietatis, & quam misericorditer judicium suum Dominus in correptionem verterit, & quam prudenter malis quoque ipsis usus sit, & impietatem piè deposuerit, ut unius partis corporis mei justissima plaga duabus mederetur animabus. Confer periculum & liberationis modum. Confer languorem & medicinam. Meritorum causas inspicere, & miserationis affectus admirare.—Nosti quantis turpitudinibus immoderata mea libido corpora nostra addixerat, ut nulla honestatis vel Dei reverentia in ipsis etiam diebus Dominicæ Passionis, vel quantarumcumque solennitatum ab hujus luti volutabro me revocaret. Sed & te nolentem, & prout poteras reluctanter & dissuadentem, quæ natura infirmior eras, sæpius minis ac flagellis ad consensum trahebam. Tanto enim tibi concupiscentia ardore copulatus eram, ut miseras illas & obscœnissimas voluptates, quas etiam nominare confundimur, tam Deo, quam mihi ipsi præponerem: nec tam aliter consulere posse divina videretur clementia, nisi has mihi voluptates sine spe ulla omnino interdiceret. —Unde justissime & clementissime; licet cum summa tui avunculi proditiōe, ut in multis crescerem, parte illa corporis sum minutus, in qua libidinis regnum erat, & tota hujus concupiscentiæ causa consistebat: ut juste illud plesteretur membrum, quod in nobis commiserat totum, & expiaret patiēdo, quod deliquerat oblectando: & ab his me spurcitiis, quibus me totum quasi luto immerferam, tam mente quam corpore circumcideret: et tanto sacris etiam altari- bus idoneiorem efficeret, quanto me nulla hinc amplius carnalium contagia pollutionum revocarent. Quam clementer etiam in eo tantum me pati voluit membro, cujus privatio & animæ saluti consuleret, & corpus non deterparet, nec ullam officiorum ministrationem præpediret. Imo ad omnia, quæ honeste geruntur, tanto me promptiorem efficeret, quanto ab hoc concupiscentiæ jugo maximo amplius liberaret. Cum itaque membris his vilissimis, quæ pro sum- mæ turpitudinis exercitio pudenda vocantur, nec proprium sustinent nomen, me divina gratia mundavit, potius quam privavit, quid aliud egit quam ad puritatem mundiciæ conservandam sordida removit & vitia?—Hanc quidem

And do you also be my inseparable associate in this grateful thanksgiving: you were my partner in guilt, and you shared the favour of heaven. Heaven has been particularly mindful of you; even, by the happy presage of your name, it marked you for its own; for Heloisa is derived from the sacred name of Heloim.

In

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mundiciæ puritatem nonnullos sapientium vehementissime appetentes inferre etiam sibi manum audivimus, ut hoc à se penitus removerent concupiscentiæ flagitium. Pro quo etiam stimulo carnis auferendo & Apostolus perhibetur Dominum rogasse, nec exauditum esse. In exemplo est ille magnus Christianorum Philosophus Origenes, qui, ut hoc in se penitus incendium extingueret, manus sibi inferre veritus non est: ac si illos ad literam vere beatos intelligeret, qui seipsos propter regnum cœlorum castraverunt, & tales illud veraciter implere crederet, quod de membris scandalizantibus nobis præcipit Dominus, ut ea scilicet à nobis abscindamus & projiciamus, & quasi illam Isaïæ Prophetiam ad historiam magis quam ad mysterium duceret, per quam cæteris fidelibus Eunuchos Dominus præfert, dicens; “ Eunuchi si custodierint sabatha mea, & elegerint quæ volui, dabo eis in domo mea & in muris meis locum, & non men melius à filiis & filiabus. Nomen sempiternum dabo eis, quod non peribit.” Culpam tamen non modicam Origenes incurrit, dum per penam corporis remedium culpæ quærit.—Zelum quippe Dei habens, sed non secundum scientiam, homicidii, incurrit reatum inferendo sibi manum. Suggestione diabolica, vel errore maximo id ab ipso constat esse factum, quod miseratione Dei, in me est ab alio perpetratum. Culpam evito, non incurro. Mortem me reor, & vitam assequor. Vocor, & reluëtor. Insto criminibus, & ad veniam trahor invitus. Orat Apostolus, nec exauditur. Precibus instat, nec impetrat. Vere Dominus sollicitus est mei. Vadam igitur & narrabo quanta fecit Dominus animæ meæ.

Accede & tu inseparabilis comes in una gratiarum actione, quæ & culpæ particeps facta es & gratiæ. Nam & tuæ Dominus non immemor salutis, imo plurimum tui memor, qui etiam sancto quodam nominis præfagio te præcipue suam fore præsignavit, cum te videlicet Heloissam ex proprio nomine suo, quod est Heloym, insignivit.

Ipse

In the admirable order of providence, by the very means the devil aimed to destroy us, was our salvation effected. We were then just united by the indissoluble bond of marriage. It was my wish never to be separated from you; and, at that moment, God projected to draw us both to himself.—Had you been tied by no engagement, when I left the world, the persuasion of friends, or the love of pleasure, might easily have detained you in it.—It seemed, by this care of heaven, as if we had been designed for some important purpose; as if it were unbecoming, that the literary talents, we both possessed, should be employed in other business, than in celebrating the praises of our maker. Perhaps it was feared that the allurements of a woman might pervert my heart. It was the fate of Salomon.

How many are the blessings with which your labours are now daily crowned! Your spiritual children are numerous; while I, alas! can number none, and am here in vain, at  
St.

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*Ipse, inquam, clementer disposuit in uno duobus consulere, quos diabolus in uno nitebatur extinguere. Paululum enim antequam hoc accideret, nos indissolubilis lex sacramenti nuptialis invicem adstrinxerat, cum cuperem te mihi supra modum dilectam in perpetuum retinere, imo cum ipse jam tractaret ad se nos ambos hac occasione convertere.—Si enim mihi antea matrimonio non esses copulata, facile in discessu meo à sæculo, vel suggestionem parentum, vel carnalium oblectatione voluptatum, sæculo inhæsissem. Vide ergo quantum sollicitus nostri fuerit Dominus, quasi ad magnos aliquos nos reservaret usus, & quasi indignaretur aut doleret, illa literalis scientiæ talenta, quæ utrique nostrum commiserat, ad sui nominis honorem non dispensari: aut quasi etiam de incontinentissimo servulo vereretur, quod scriptum est, “Quia mulieres faciunt etiam apostatare sapientes.” Sicut de sapientissimo certum est Salomone.*

*Tuæ vero prudentiæ talentum quantas quotidie Domino referat usuras, quæ multas domino jam spirituales filias peperisti, me penitus sterili permanente, &*

St. Gildas, preaching to these sons of perdition. And would not, think you, the loss have been deplorable, if, immersed in the ignoble pleasures of the world, in lieu of the splendid offspring you now rear for heaven, you had been, with pain, the mother only of a few earthly children? Then would you have been a mere woman; and now you surpass us all, and now you change the curse of Eve into the blessing of Mary. Those hands which, in holy occupation, now turn over the sacred volumes, had been unbecomingly engaged in the mean offices of domestic life!—From such unseemly occupations we have been graciously called, even by a holy violence, as was the great apostle. It has been meant, perhaps, for an example, from which other learned persons may take warning, and not presume on their own strength.

Be not therefore afflicted, Heloïsa, nor repine at this paternal chastisement. “God corrects whom he loves.” Our sufferings are momentary; they are to purify, and not destroy

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in filiis perditionis inaniter laborante. O. quam detestabile damnum! quam lamentabile incommodum, si carnalium voluptatum fordibus vacans paucos cum dolore pareres mundo, quæ nunc multiplicem prolem cum exultatione parturis cœlo! Nec esses plus quam fœmina, quæ nunc etiam viros transcendis, & quæ maledictionem Evæ in benedictionem vertisti Mariæ. O quam indecenter manus illæ sacræ, quæ nunc etiam divina revolvunt volumina, curæ muliebris obscœnitatibus deservirent!—Ipse nos à contagiis hujus cœni, à voluptatibus hujus luti dignatus est erigere & ad seipsum vi quadam attrahere, qua percussum voluit Paulum convertere, & hoc ipso fortassis exemplo nostro, alios quoque literarum peritos ab hac deterrere præsumptione.

Ne te id igitur, soror, obsecro moveat, nec patri paterne nos corrigenti sis molesta; sed attende quod scriptum est: “Quos diligit Deus, hos corripit.” Castigat autem omnem filium quem recipit,” Et alibi, “Qui parcit virgæ, odit.

destroy us. Listen to the prophet, and be comforted. "God will not judge, nor will he twice punish the same crime," says he. Attend to the important advice, which truth itself has given to us: "In patience you shall possess your souls." So says Salomon: "The patient man is better than the warrior, and he that is master of his own mind than the conqueror of cities."

Are you not moved to compunction and to tears, when you behold the innocent son of God, suffering such various torments for you and for us all? Him have ever before your eyes; carry him in your thoughts. View him going out to Calvary, and bearing the heavy weight of his cross. Join the company of the people, and of the holy women, who lamented

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"odit filium." Poena est hæc momentanea, non æterna; purgationis, non damnationis. Audi Prophetam, & comfortare: "Non judicabit Dominus bis in id ipsum, & non confurget duplex tribulatio." Attende summam illam & maximam Veritatis adhortationem: "In patientia vestra possidebitis animas vestras." Unde & Salomon: "Melior est patiens viro forti, & qui dominatur animo suo, expugnatore urbium."

Non te ad lachrymas, aut ad compunctionem movet unigenitus Dei innocens pro te & omnibus, ab impiissimis comprehensus, distractus, flagellatus, & velata facie illusus, & colaphizatus, sputis confusus, spinis coronatus, & tandem in illo crucis tunc tam ignominioso patibulo inter latrones suspensus, atque illo tunc horrendo, & execrabili genere mortis interfectus? Hunc semper, foror, verum tuum & totius Ecclesiæ Sponsum præ oculis habe, mente gere. Intuere hunc exeuntem ad crucifigendum pro te & bajulantem sibi crucem. Esto de populo & mulieribus, quæ plangebant & lamentabantur eum, sicut Lucas his verbis narrat: "Sequebatur autem multa turba populi & mulierum, quæ plangebant & lamentabantur eum." Ad quas quidem benigne conversus, clementer eis prædixit futurum in ultionem suæ mortis exitium, à quo quidem si saperent, cavere sibi per hoc possent. "Filix, inquit, Hierusalem, nolite, flere super me, sed super vos ipsas flete, & super filios vestros."

"Quoniam.

lamented and wailed round him.—Learn to sympathise with his sufferings; be early at his monument, and strew perfumes on his grave. But remember, they be spiritual odours; and with your tears bedew them.

When they who love their prince, see his first and only son expiring before them, how excessive is their lamentation! The royal family and the whole court are dissolved in tears. But it is the young queen, the spouse of the deceased, whose

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“ Quoniam ecce venient dies in quibus dicent: Beatæ steriles, & ventres qui non genuerunt, & ubera quæ non lactaverunt. Tunc incipient dicere montibus, Cadite super nos; & collibus, Operite nos. Quia si in viridi ligno hæc faciunt, in arido quid fiet? ”—Patienti sponte pro redemptione tua compatere, & super crucifixo prote compungere.—Sepulchro ejus mente semper assiste, & cum fidelibus fœminis lamentare & luge. De quibus, etiam ut jam supra memini scriptum est, “ Mulieres sedentes ad monumentum lamentanter flentes Dominum.” Para cum illis sepulturæ ejus unguenta, sed meliora, spiritualia quidem, non corporalia: hæc enim requirit aromata, qui non suscepit illa. Super his toto devotionis affectu compungere.—Ad quam quidem compassionis compunctionem ipse etiam per Hieremiam fideles adhortatur dicens: “ O vos omnes qui transitis per viam, attendite & videte, si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus.” Id est, si super aliquo patiente ita est per compassionem dolendum, cum ego scilicet solus sine culpa, quod alii deliquerint, luam. Ipse autem est via, per quam fideles de exilio transeant ad patriam.—Qui etiam crucem, de qua sic clamat, ad hoc, nobis erexit scalam. Hic pro te occisus est unigenitus Dei, oblatus est, quia voluit. Super hoc uno compatiendo dole, dolendo compatere. Et quod per Zachariam Prophetam de animabus devotis prædictum est comple: “ Plangent, inquit, planctum, quia si super unigenitum, & dolebunt super eum, ut doleri solet in morte primogeniti.”

Vide, Soror, quantus sit planctus his qui Regem diligunt super morte primogeniti ejus & unigeniti. Intuere quo planctu familia, quo mœrore tota consummatur Curia &, cum ad Sponsam unigeniti mortui perveneris, intolerabiles



whose sighs are most afflicting, and whose cries are loudest. —These your grief must emulate. You are the consort of the lamb. He purchased you for himself, and he redeemed you. His right to you then is indisputable; and see, how dear you must be to him.—What could he, who needs no one, behold in you, that should force him to undergo so much for your sake? His love was disinterested; it fought for nothing but yourself, and for you he was disposed to die. This is the test of charity. He was your true friend, and not I, Heloisa. My love, which involved us both in crimes, did not deserve the name. The gratification of my passions was all I looked for. I suffered, you say, for you; and so it may be: but rather it was on your account only that I suffered, and that reluctantly. In that there was no love. Nor was it to do you good so much, as to add to your grief and to oppress you more. But he, your Saviour, voluntarily suffered for you; he suffered to heal your maladies, and to do away your pains. To him then, and not to

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biles ululatus ejus non sustinebis.—Hic tuus, Soror, planctus, hic tuus fit ululatus, quæ te huic Sponso felici copulasti matrimonio. Emit te iste non fuis, sed seipso. Proprio sanguine emit te, & redemit. Quantum jus in te habeat vide, & quam preciosa sis intueri.—Hoc quidem pretium suum Apostolus attendens, & in hoc pretio quanti sit ipse, pro quo ipsum datur, perpendens, & quam tantæ gratiæ vicem referat adnectens: “ Absit mihi, inquit, “ gloriari nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi, per quem mihi mundus “ crucifixus est, & ego mundo.” Major es cælo, major es mundo; cujus pretium ipse conditor mundi factus est. Quid in te, rogo, viderit, qui nullius eget, ut pro te acquirenda usque ad agonias tam horrendæ atque ignominiosæ mortis certaverit? Quid in te, inquam, quærit nisi teipsam? Verus est amicus, qui te ipsam, non tua desiderat. Verus est amicus, qui pro te moriturus dicebat. “ Majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponat.

“ quis

to me, be directed all your tenderneſs; all your tears, and all your ſympathy. Grieve that ſo great cruelty was practiſed on innocence; and not that a juſt vengeance fell on me, when even this vengeance rather was a favour from heaven.

If equity offends you, you are unjuſt, Heloiſa: and if knowingly you reſiſt the will and the kindneſs of providence, your ſin is greater. Bewail your redeemer, not your ſeducer; him who died for you, not your ſervant who, freed from death, juſt now begins to live.

To the events, which have mercifully befallen us both, learn then to ſubmit with patience. It was the hand of a father which ſtruck, not to deſtroy, but to correct us. His ſevereſt

“ quis pro amicis fuiſ.” Amabat te ille veraciter, non ego. Amor meus, qui utrumque noſtrum peccatis involvebat, concupiſcentia. non amor dicendus eſt. Miſeras in te meas voluptates implebam, & hoc erat totum quod amabam. Pro te, inquis, paſſus ſum, & fortaiſſis verum eſt: ſed magis per te, & hoc ipſum invitus. Non amore tui, ſed coactione mei. Nec ad tuam ſalutem ſed ad dolorem. Ille vero ſalubriter, ille pro te ſponte paſſus eſt, qui paſſione ſua omnem curat languorem, omnem removet paſſionem. In hoc, obſecro, non in me tua tota ſit devotio, tota compaſſio, tota compunctio. Dole in tam innocentem tantæ crudelitatis perpetrata iniquitatem: non juſtam in me æquitatis vindictam, imo gratiam, ut dictum eſt, in utroſque ſummam.

Iniqua enim es, ſi æquitatem non amas; et iniquiſſima, ſi voluntati, imo tantæ gratiæ Dei ſcienter es adverſa. Plange tuum reparatorem, non corruptorem; redemptorem, non ſcortatorem: pro te mortuum Dominum, non viventem ſervum, imo nunc primum de morte vere liberatum.—Cave obſecro ne, quod dixit Pompeius mœrenti Corneliæ, tibi impropereſtur turpiſſime.—Attende, precor, id, & erubeſce, niſi admiſſas turpitudines impudentiſſimas commendes.

Accipe itaque, Soror, accipe quæſo patienter, quæ nobis acciderunt miſericorditer. Virga hæc eſt patris, non gladius perſecutoris. Percutit pater ut corrigat,

feverest blow gave life to my soul. He might justly have overwhelmed me, when to save me from eternal punishment, he inflicted momentary pain. You and I had both been guilty ; and he was satisfied that one should suffer.—It is true, you had deserved less, for by nature you were more infirm, and your virtue was more constant. In equity did God weigh these circumstances : and I thank him from my heart, that he laid no punishment on you, and yet reserved for you the palm of victory. Me, indeed, he chastised, and stilled the tempest of my passions ; but you he destined to nobler contests, and to the rewards of those who conquer. This I know you do not hear with pleasure, and you forbade me to repeat it : but it is not therefore less the language of truth. He who has an enemy to oppose, has ever victory to look to ; for he only, says the apostle, shall be crowned who has contended stoutly.

For

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*corrigat, ne feriat hostis, ut occidat. Vulnere mortem prævenit, non ingerit : immittit ferrum ut amputet morbum. Corpus vulnerat, & animam sanat. Occidere debuerat, & vivificat. Immunditiam resecat, ut mundum relinquat. Punit semel ne puniat semper. Patitur Unus ex vulnere, ut duobus parcatur à morte. Duo in culpa, unus in pœna.—Id quoque tuæ infirmitati naturæ divina indulgetur miseratione, & quodam modo juste. Quo enim naturaliter sexu infirmior eras, & fortior continentia, pœnæ minus eras obnoxia. Refero Domino in hoc gratias, qui te tunc, & à pœna liberavit, & ad coronam reservavit ; & cum me una corporis mei passione semel ab omni æstu hujus concupiscentiæ, in qua una totus per immoderatam incontinentiam occupatus eram, refrigeravit ne corruam ; multas adolescentiæ tuæ majores animi passiones ex assidua carnis suggestione, reservavit ad martyrii coronam. Quod licet te audire tædeat, & dici prohibeas. Veritas tamen id loquitur manifesta. Cui enim semper est pugna, superest & corona, quia non coronabitur nisi qui legitime certaverit.*

For me remain no laurels ; but it is some consolation, that I have less to withstand here, and that I may have escaped, perhaps, eternal punishment hereafter.—If I complain that my source of merit is diminished ; I am pleased that your's should be augmented. We are one in Christ, and one by the bond of marriage. What you can call your own, to me may not be indifferent. I have said, I am now your servant, whom once you called your master : but it is charity rather which unites me to you, than any fear that rules me. My confidence then in your patronage is great ; your prayers will effect what mine cannot. At this time particularly when imminent dangers, and a thousand cares distract my thoughts, and allow no time for prayer. Nor have I more leisure to read the word of God, and to ponder its sacred truths, in imitation of the Æthiopian eunuch, of whom we read.

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Mihi vero nulla superest corona, quia nulla subest certaminis causa. Deest materia pugnæ, cui ablati sunt stimulus concupiscentiæ. Aliquid tamen esse æstimo, si cum hinc nullam percipiam coronam, nonnullam tamen evitem pœnam, & dolore unius momentaneæ pœnæ multis fortassis indulgeatur æternis. Scriptum est quippe de hujus miserrimæ vitæ hominibus, imo jumentis : “ Computruerunt jumenta in stercore suis.”—Minus quoque meritum meum minui conqueror, dum tuum crescere non diffido. Unum quippe sumus in Christo, una per legem matrimonii caro. Quicquid est tuum, mihi non arbitrator alienum. Tuus autem est Christus, quia facta es sponsa ejus. Et nunc, ut supra memini, me habes servum, quem olim agnoscebas Dominum : magis tibi tamen amore nunc spirituali conjunctum, quam timore subiectum. Unde & de tuo nobis apud ipsum patrociniò amplius confidimus. Ut id obtineam ex tua quod non possum ex oratione propria. Et nunc maxime cum quotidiana periculorum, aut perturbationum instantia, nec vivere me, nec orationi sinat vacare. Nec illum beatissimum imitari potentem Candacis Reginæ Æthiopum, qui erat super omnes gazas ejus, & de tam longinquo venerat adorare in Hierusalem.

read that an apostle was sent by heaven to instruct him. He had the holy Scriptures in his hand, and he read as he journeyed homeward.

That no impediment may lie in the way of my request, and that it may be delayed no longer, I have composed, and I here send you a prayer, which, with hands raised to heaven, you will daily repeat for us both.

The P R A Y E R.

“ O GOD, who, in the beginning of all things, having  
 “ drawn woman from the side of man, didst institute the  
 “ great sacrament of marriage, and by thy own birth, and  
 “ thy first miracle, didst then raise it to higher honours,  
 “ of the grace of which sacrament I once, in thy goodness,  
 “ was allowed to partake; reject not, oh reject not, the  
 “ prayers of thy humble handmaid, which, here prostrate  
 “ in

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falem. Ad quem revertentem missus est ab angelo Philippus Apostolus, ut eum converteret ad fidem: quod jam ille meruerat per orationem; vel sacre lectionis assiduitatem. A qua quidem ut nec in via tunc vacaret, licet ditissimus & gentilis, magno divinæ dispensationis actum est beneficio, ut locus ei Scripturæ occurreret, qui opportunissimam conversionis ejus occasionem Apostolo præberet.

Ne quid vero hanc petitionem nostram impediat, vel impleri differat, orationem quoque ipsam, quam pro nobis domino supplices dicatis, componere, & mittere tibi maturavi.

O R A T I O.

“ DEUS, qui ab ipso humanæ creationis exordio, fœmina de costa viri  
 “ formata, nuptialis copulæ sacramentum maximum sanxisti, quique immen-  
 “ sis honoribus, vel de desponsata nascendo, vel miracula inchoando, nuptias  
 “ sublimasti, meæque etiam fragilitatis incontinentiæ utcumque tibi placuit,  
 “ olim hoc remedium indulxisti: Ne despicias ancillulæ tuæ preces, quas

“ in the prefence of thy majesty, I pour out for my own  
 “ fins, and for the fins of my dear Abeillard. Pardon,  
 “ thou kindest being, thou, who art goodness itself, par-  
 “ don our manifold crimes: may our numberless faults  
 “ experience the greatness of thy mercies! I beseech thee,  
 “ now punish us, for we are guilty, and spare us hereafter.  
 “ Use against thy servants the rod of correction, but not  
 “ the sword of thy wrath. Chastise our bodies, but shew  
 “ pity to our souls. Purify them, but not in thy anger. Be  
 “ merciful, rather than be just. As a father correcteth his  
 “ children, so do thou chasten us, and not as an austere-  
 “ master.—Try us, O Lord, as the prophet requests, and  
 “ measure our strength; then lay thy burdens on us. By  
 “ the blessed Paul thou hast promised, that man shall not be  
 “ tempted beyond his strength.—When it pleased thee, and  
 “ as it pleased thee, so didst thou join us, O Lord, and so  
 “ didst thou put us asunder. The work thou didst begin  
 “ in mercy, do thou in mercy perfect. Whom thou didst  
 “ once

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“ pro meis ipsis charique mei excessibus in conspectu majestatis tuæ supplex  
 “ effundo. Ignosce, ô Benignissime, imo Benignitas ipsa; ignosce & tantis  
 “ criminibus nostris: & ineffabilis misericordiæ tuæ multitudinem culparum  
 “ nostrarum immensitas experiatur. Puni obsecro in præsentem reos, ut parcas  
 “ in futuro. Puni ad horam, ne punias in æternum. Accipe in servos virgam  
 “ correctionis, non gladium furoris. Afflige carnem, ut conserves animas.  
 “ Ad sis purgator, non ultor; benignus magis quam justus: Pater misericors,  
 “ non austerus Dominus.—Proba nos Domine & tenta, sicut de semetipso.  
 “ rogat Propheta. Ac si aperte diceret: Prius vires inspice, ac secundum eas,  
 “ tentationum onera moderare. Quod & Beatus Paulus fidelibus tuis promit-  
 “ tens ait: Potens est enim Deus, qui non patietur vos tentari supra id quod  
 “ potestis, sed faciet cum tentatione etiam proventum ut possitis sustinere.—  
 “ Conjunxisti nos Domine, & divisisti quando placuit tibi, & quo modo placuit.  
 “ Nunc

“ once separate here, unite for ever to thyself in heaven.  
 “ Thou art our hope, our portion, our expectation, our  
 “ comfort. O Lord, blessed by thy name for ever !”  
 Farewell in Christ, and live to him !—Amen.

LETTER V.

HELOISA TO ABEILLARD.

**T**HAT you may not have cause to charge me with disobedience, as you ordered, so have I checked the language of immoderate grief. When I write to you, my expressions shall be more temperate : but on other occasions, I cannot promise to refrain my tongue.—Nothing is less in our power than our own minds ; and we are oftener forced to obey, than we can command, their operations. The sudden impulse of strong affections cannot be at once repressed ; their effects are visible, and they more easily announce

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“ Nunc quod, Domine, misericorditer cœpisti, misericordissime comple. Et  
 “ quos à se semel divisisti in mundo, perenniter tibi conjugas in cœlo. Spes  
 “ nostra, pars nostra, expectatio nostra, consolatio nostra, Domine qui es bene-  
 “ dictus in sæcula. Amen.”

Vale in Christo, Sponsa Christi, in Christo vale, & Christo vive. Amen.

EPISTOLA III.

HELOISSÆ.

*Domino specialiter, sua singulariter.*

NE me forte in aliquo de inobedientia causari queas, verbis etiam immoderati doloris tuæ frenum impositum est jussionis, ut ab his mihi saltem in scribendo temperem, à quibus in sermone non tam difficile, quam impossibile est providere.—Nihil enim minus in nostra est potestate quam animus, eique magis obedire cogimur, quam imperare possimus. Unde et cum nos ejus affectiones

announce themselves in words, which are their readiest vehicle. "From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." But I will keep my pen in subjection, even when my tongue shall be ungovernable. It would be well, indeed, if my mind were as subservient!

To restore me to serenity is not, I fear, in your power; but you can moderate my sorrow. One thought is banished by another. The chain of gloomy meditation is broken, when new objects engage the attention; and the more honourable, or expedient, or interesting these may appear, the more intense will be their impression, and the more will the mind turn aside from trouble.

We request then that you will enter on the discussion of two points, the knowledge of which will be very useful to us. Tell us the origin of the female monastic institute; and then give us a rule, adapted to our sex, and which may comprise all the duties of our state. For want of this, men  
and

tiones stimulant nemo earum subitos impulsus ita repulerit, ut non in effecta facile prorumpant, & se per verba facilius effluent, quæ promptiores animi passionum sunt notæ. Secundum quod scriptum est, "Ex abundantia cordis os loquitur." Revocabo itaque manum à scripto, in quibus linguam à verbis temperare non valeo. Utinam sic animus dolentis parere promptus sit, quemadmodum dextra scribentis.

Aliquod tamen dolori remedium vales conferre, si non hunc omnino possis auferre. Ut enim insertum clavum alius expellit, sic cogitatio nova priorem excludit. Cum alias intentus animus priorum memoriam dimittere cogitur aut intermittere. Tanto vero amplius cogitatio quælibet animum occupat, & ab aliis deducit; quanto quod cogitatur honestius æstimatur, & quo intendimus animum magis videtur necessarium.

Omnes itaque nos Christi ancillæ, & in Christo filiæ tuæ, duo nunc à tua paternitate supplices postulamus, quæ nobis admodum necessaria providemus. Quorum  
quidem



and women are now subject to the same rule; the same burden is laid on all. This is the rule of St. Bennet, practised through the Western church. View only its several injunctions, as to the dress, for instance of the religious, and the distinct duties of the abbot; and tell me how any part of them can be applied to nuns, or to their superior? Are we to shew no hospitality to the other sex; or when they come, must the abbess, as the general rule requires, give them entertainment at her table? Great is the danger in this promiscuous society, and particularly at meals where excess is often committed, and wine begins to loosen the passions of the soul.

Of

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quidem alterum est, ut nos instruere velis unde Sanctimonialium Ordo cœperit, & quæ nostræ sit professionis autoritas. Alterum vero est, ut aliquam nobis Regulam instituas, & scriptam dirigas, quæ fœminarum sit propria, & ex integro nostræ conversationis statum habitumque describat: quod nondum à Patribus sanctis actum esse conspeximus. Cujus quidem rei defectu & indigentia nunc agitur, ut ad ejusdem Regulæ professionem, tam mares quam fœminæ in Monasteriis suscipiantur, & idem institutionis Monasticæ jugum imponitur infirmo sexui, æque ut forti. Unam quippè nunc Regulam Beati Benedicti apud Latinos fœminæ profitentur, æque ut viri. Quam sicut viris solummodo constat scriptam esse, ita & ab ipsis tantum impleri posse tam subjectis, pariter quam prælatis. Ut enim cætera nunc omittam Regulæ capitula, quid ad fœminas, quod de cucullis, femoralibus, & scapularibus ibi scriptum est? Quid denique ad ipsas de tunicis aut de laneis ad carnem indumentis; cum earum humoris superflui menstruæ purgationes hæc omnino refugiant? Quid ad ipsas etiam, quod de Abbate statuitur, ut ipse lectionem dicat Evangelicam, & post ipsam Hymnum incipiat? Quid de mensa Abbatis seorsim cum peregrinis & hospitibus constituenda: Nunquid nostræ convenit religioni, Ut vel nunquam hospitium viris præbeat, aut cum his, quos susceperit viri, Abbatissa comedat? O quam facilis ad ruinam animarum virorum ac mulierum in unum cohabitatio! Maxime vero in mensa, ubi crapula dominatur & ebrietas, & vinum in dulcedine bibitur, in quo est luxuria.

Quod

## THE LETTERS OF

Of this the holy Jerom was sensible. Writing to a Roman lady and her daughter, he says; "In banquets innocence is not easily preserved."—And Ovid, that master of foul obscenity, has been careful to point out the many occasions which the table supplies for criminal indulgence. He says;

Vinaque cum bibulas sparsere Cupidinis alas,  
 Permanet, et capto stat gravis ille loco:  
 Tum veniunt risus; tum pauper cornua fumit;  
 Tum dolor et curæ, rugaque frontis abit.  
 Illic sæpe animos juvenum rapuere puellæ:  
 Et Venus in venis, ignis in igne furit.

De Art. Am. l. 1.

And if women only be admitted to our table, will there then, think you, be no danger? Truly, if the business of seduction is to be carried on, I know nothing so efficacious as female art. To our own sex it is that we chuse to reveal the corrupt maxims of our hearts. The same experienced  
 Jerom

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Quod & Beatus præcavens Hieronymus, ad matrem & filiam scribens, meminisse dicens: "Difficile inter epulas servatur pudicitia." Ipse quoque Poëta, luxuriæ turpitudinisque doctor, Libro Amatoriæ artis intitulo, quantam fornicationis occasionem convivia maxime præbeant, studiose exequitur dicens:

Vinaque cum bibulas sparsere Cupidinis alas,  
 Permanet, & capto stat gravis ille loco,  
 Tum veniunt risus: tum pauper cornua fumit:  
 Tum dolor & curæ; rugaque frontis abit.  
 Illic sæpe animos juvenum rapuere puellæ:  
 Et Venus in venis, ignis in igne furit.

Nunquid & si fæminas solas hospitio susceptas ad mensam admiserint, nullum ibi latet periculum? Certe in seducenda muliere nullum est æque facile ut lenocinium muliebri. Nec corruptæ mentis turpitudinem ita promptè cuiquam mulier

Jerom always advised his fair pupils to avoid with caution the society of women of the world.—In a word, if we only admit women, we shall irritate the men, of whose assistance our convents particularly stand in need. Is it just, besides, that no return should be made to those who are our greatest benefactors?

Seeing then that the whole compass of our rule cannot be complied with, have we not reason to fear the censure of St. James, that, “He who violates the law in one article, transgresses against the whole?” I find no exception in the rule of greater or less obligations.

But

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*mulier committit sicut mulier. Unde & prædictus Hieronimus maxime sæcularium accessus fœminarum vitare propositi sancti fœminas adhortatur.— Denique si viris ab hospitalitate nostra exclusis, solas admittamus fœminas, quis non videat quanta exasperatione viros offendamus, quorum beneficiis Monasteria sexus infirmi egent, maxime si eis à quibus plus accipiunt, minus aut omnino, nihil largiri videantur?*

*Quod si prædictæ Regulæ tenor à nobis impleri non potest, vereor ne illud Apostoli Jacobi in nostram quoque damnationem dictum sit: “Quicumque totam legem observaverit, offendat autem in uno, factus est omnium reus.” Quod est dicere: De hoc ipso reus statuitur qui peragit multa, quod non implet omnia. Et transgressor legis efficitur ex uno, cujus impletor non fuerit, nisi consummatis omnibus ejus præceptis. Quod ipse statim diligenter exponens Apostolus adjecit: “Qui enim dixit Non mœchaberis, dixit &, Non occides. Quod si non mœchaberis, occidas autem, factus et transgressor legis.” Ac si aperte dicat: Ideo quilibet reus fit de transgressione uniuscuiuslibet præcepti, quia ipse Dominus, qui præcipit unum, præcipit & aliud. Et quodcumque legis violetur præceptum, ipse contemnitur, qui legem non in uno, sed in omnibus pariter mandatis constituit.*

But passing over those particulars, with which we cannot comply, or not without danger : who ever beheld a convent of nuns employed in the harvest, or in the general business of farming? Can it be expected that a whole year should be spent in our noviciates; or that three expositions of the rule may suffice? What, in short, can be more foolish than to enter on a road, dark and hitherto unexplored? Need I mention the presumption there is, in choosing and daring to profess a life, of which we know nothing, and in making vows which evidently cannot be fulfilled? Prudence is the mother of all virtues; and reason must guide our best actions. Indeed, where they are wanting, what practice can be called good or virtuous? Even virtues which run into excess, may more properly, as Jerom observes, be entered on the list of vices. And can there be a more absurd attempt than to impose burdens, before the shoulders have been tried which are to bear them? Human exertions cannot

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Ut autem præteriam illa regulæ instituta, quæ penitus observare non possumus, aut sine periculo non valemus: Ubi unquam ad colligendas messes Conventus Monialium exire, vel labores agrorum habere consuevit? Aut suscipiendarum sæminarum constantiam uno anno probaverit, easque tertio perfecta regula, sicut in ipsa jubetur, instruxerit? Quid rursus stultius quam viam ignotam, nec adhuc demonstratam aggredi? Quid præsumptuosius quam eligere ac profiteri vitam, quam nescias, aut votum facere, quod implere non queas? Sed & cum omnium virtutum discretio sit mater, & omnium bonorum mediatrix sit ratio; quis aut virtutem aut bonum censeat, quod ab istis dissentire videatur! Ipsas quippe virtutes excedentes modum atque mensuram, sicut Hieronymus asserit, inter vitia reputari convenit. Quis autem ab omni ratione ac discretionem sejunctum non videat, si ad imponenda onera eorum quibus imponuntur, valitudines prius non discutiantur, ut naturæ constitutionem humana sequatur industria? Quis asinum farcina tanta, quæ dignum.

not exceed the strength of nature. Who would take the ponderous load from an elephant, and lay it on the back of an afs? Can children or old men do the work of vigorous age? All must be in just proportion. Expect not then from us the exertions of manhood, or atchievements which may become the strength of your arms. The holy Gregory's admonitions are apposite to these maxims.

As in framing the monkish rules no mention is made of women, and even statutes are introduced wholly unadapted to their characters, it is plain that they were not meant for us. Nature must not be forced. Of this, Bennet our holy father, in whose breast every virtue was seen to dwell, was so sensible, that he would adapt his rule, as far as might be, to the constitutions of men, and the variation of seasons. Let all things, says he, be done in measure. He begins by  
the

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*dignum judicat elephantem? Quis tanta pueris aut senibus, quanta viris injungat? Tanta debilibus scilicet quanta fortibus, tanta infirmis, quanta sanis, tanta fœminis, quanta maribus? Infirmiori videlicet sexui, quanta & forti? Quod diligenter Beatus Papa Gregorius attendens, Pastoralis sui cap. xiv. tam de admonendis, quam de præcipiendis ita distinxit: " Aliter igitur " admonendi sunt viri, atque aliter fœminæ: quia illis gravia, istis vero sunt " injungenda leviora: & alios magna exerceant, istas vero levia demulcendo " convertant."*

*Certe & qui Monachorum Regulas scripserunt, nec solum de fœminis omnino tacuerunt, verum etiam illa statuerunt, quæ eis nullatenus convenire sciebant: satis commode innuerunt nequaquam eodem jugo Regulæ tauri & juven-cæ præmendam esse cervicem, quia quos dispares natura creavit, æquari labore non convenit. Hujus autem discretionis Beatus non immemor Benedictus, tanquam omnium justorum spiritu plenus, pro qualitate hominum aut temporum, cuncta sic moderatur in Regula, ut omnia, sicut ipsemet uno concludit*

the abbot, and ordains that in governing his monks, he pay due attention to their respective dispositions and talents; that he always bear his own infirmities before his eyes: and that he be careful not to crush the tender reed. “ If I force  
 “ my flock, said Jacob, to advance too far, they will all die  
 “ in one day.” Prudence then must be used, that the stout be seasonably employed, and the weak be not disheartened.

Agreeably to these wise maxims, Bennet shews indulgence to the young, to the old, and to those of delicate habits. He considers the particular duties which the rule may impose; and he wishes to proportion the quality and quantity of food to the constitutions of his subjects.—Even the times of fasting he has so regulated, that they shall not fall at improper seasons, or on those who have much work to do.

How

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*loco, mensurate fiant. Primo itaque ab ipso incipiens Abbate; præcipit cum ita subiectis præsidere, ut secundum unius, inquit, cujusque qualitatem vel intelligentiam ita se omnibus conformet & aptet, ut non solum detrimenta gregis sibi commissi non patiatur, verum in augmentatione boni gregis gaudeat, suamque fragilitatem semper suspectus sit, memineritque calamum quassatum non conterendum. Discernat & tempora, cogitans discretionem sancti Jacob dicentis: “ Si greges meos plus in ambulando fecero laborare, morientur cuncti una die.” Hæc ergo aliaque testimonia discretionis matris virtutum fumens, sic omnino temperet, ut & fortes sit quod cupiant, & infirmi non resugiant.*

*Ad hanc quidem dispensationis moderationem indulgentia pertinet puerorum, senum, & omnino debiliū, Lectoris, seu Septimanariorum, coquinæ ante alios refectio, & in ipso etiam Conventu de ipsa cibi vel potus qualitate, seu quantitate, pro diversitate hominum providentia. De quibus quidem singulis ibi diligenter scriptum est.—Ipsa quoque statuta jejunii tempora pro qualitate temporis, vel quantitate laboris ita relaxat, prout naturæ postulat infirmitas.*

Quid

How then, think you, would this wife man have acted, had he undertaken also to give laws to women? He that in his own sex could consider the many incidents of human weakness, would have well known how to measure ours. Do you, Abeillard, take a lesson from his example, and fancy not that one rule will apply likewise to us, or that we can bear your burthens.—For us, I think, it will be enough, if in our virtues we shall be able to rival the bishops of God's church, and her clergy. Nor truly would it be contemptible to come up to the perfection of the good laity. What in you men of stout virtue hardly deserves notice, in us may be called admirable.

The learned Chrysostom knew how to value the virtue of the lay christian. He advises all to follow the lesson of the Apostle,

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*Quid obsecro? ubi iste, qui sic ad hominum & temporum qualitatem omnia moderatur, ut ab omnibus sine murmuratione proferri queant, quæ instituuntur: Quid, inquam, de fæminis provideret, si eis quoque pariter ut viris Regulam institueret? Si enim in quibusdam Regulæ rigorem pueris, senibus, & debilibus pro ipsa naturæ debilitate vel infirmitate temperare cogitur: quid de fragili sexu provideret, cujus maxime debilis & infirma natura cognoscitur? Perpende itaque quam longe absistat ab omni rationis discretione, ejusdem Regulæ professione tam fœminas, quam viros obligari, eademque sarcina tam debiles, quam fortes onerari.—Satis esse nostræ arbitror infirmitati, si nos ipsis Ecclesiæ Rectoribus, & qui in sacris Ordinibus constituti sunt, Clericis, tam continentiæ, quam abstinentiæ virtus æquaverit. Maxime cum Veritas dicat. “ Perfectus omnis erit, si sit sicut magister ejus.” Quibus etiam pro magno reputandum esset, si religiosos laicos æquiparare possemus. Quæ namq; in fortibus parva censemus, in debilibus admiramur. Et juxta illud Apostoli. “ Virtus in infirmitate perficitur.”*

Ne vero Laicorum religio pro parvo ducatur, qualis fuit Abrahæ, David, Job, licet conjugatorum, Chrysostomus in Epistola ad Hebræos, sermone 7. nobis

Apostle, to *watch* and *pray*, and to *mortify* the flesh.—This advice was not given to monks only. Indeed, what are the indulgences to which the laity may pretend? They may marry: besides that, we have all the same obligations. Our divine master made no distinction. Hard truly would be the condition of mankind, if the same rewards were not promised to all; or if matrimony were supposed to be a bar to virtue here, and to happiness hereafter.

If to the gospel precepts then *we* superadd the virtue of continence, we shall have done our duty. Would to God, we were only able, by our best exertions, to fulfill those precepts; that we did not aspire to be more than christians! —If I am not mistaken, it was from an idea that new laws were ill-adapted to our natures, and that we could not bear  
the

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nobis occurrit, dicens: “Sunt multa in quibus poterit laborare, ut bestiam illam incantet. Quæ sunt ista? labores, lectiones, vigiliæ. Sed quid ad nos hæc, inquit, qui non fumus Monachi? Hæc mihi dicis? Dic Paulo, cum dicit: Vigilantes in omni patientia & oratione: cum dicit, Carnis curam me feceritis in concupiscentiis.”—Non enim hæc Monachis scribebat tantum, sed omnibus qui erant in civitatibus. Non enim sæcularis homo debet aliquid amplius habere Monacho, quam cum uxore concumbere tantum. Hic enim habet veniam, in aliis autem nequaquam: sed omnia æqualiter sicut Monachi agere debet. Nam & beatitudines, quæ à Christo dicuntur, non Monachis tantum dictæ sunt. Alioquin universus mundus peribit, & in angustum inclusit ea, quæ virtutis sunt. Et quomodo honorabiles sunt nuptiæ, quæ nobis tantum impediunt?

Ex quibus quidem verbis aperte colligitur, quod quisquis Evangelicis præceptis continentiae virtutem addiderit, Monasticam perfectionem implebit. Atque utinam ad hoc nostra Religio conscendere posset, ut Evangelium imple-ret, non transcenderet: ne plusquam Christianæ appeteremus esse.—Hinc profecto, ni fallor, sancti decreverunt Patres, non ita nobis, sicut viris gene-  
ralem



the imposition of extraordinary vows, that the holy fathers would not enact any particular statutes for our sex. They adhered to the maxims of the apostle, that "where there is no law, there is less prevarication."

Conscious of our weakness, the same Paul, though the professed admirer of continence, urges young widows to marry, to become the mothers of children, and the mistresses of families. The blessed Jerom approved the advice:

"It would be better, says he, to marry, and to walk the beaten road, than to aim at great things, and fall headlong into ruin."—St. Austin was an enemy to rash engagements: "She that is free, he says, let her seriously reflect; and to her that is bound I recommend perseverance."—The ancient canons of discipline forbade women to tie themselves by vows before the age of forty, and even that

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ralem aliquam Regulam, quasi novam legem præfigere, nec magnitudine votorum nostram infirmitatem onerare, attendentes illud Apostoli: "Lex enim iram operatur. Ubi enim non est lex, nec prævaricatio." Et iterum: "Lex autem subintravit; ut abundaret delictum."

Idem quoque maximus continentiae prædicator de infirmitate nostra plurimum confidens, & quasi ad secundas nuptias urgens juniores viduas: "Volo, inquit, juniores nubere, filios procreare, matres familias esse, nullam occasionem dare adversario." Quod & Beatus Hieronymus saluberrimum esse considerans, Eustochio de improvisis fæminarum votis consulit, his verbis. "Si autem & illæ, quæ virgines sunt, ob alias tamen culpas non solvantur: quid fiet illis, quæ prostituerunt membra Christi, & mutaverunt templum Spiritus sancti in lupanar? Rectius fuerat homini subiisse conjugium, ambulasse per plana, quam altiora intendentem in profundum inferni cadere."—Quarum etiam temerariæ professioni sanctus Augustinus consulens, in libro de Continentia Viduali ad Julianum scribit his verbis: "Quæ non cœpit deliberet, quæ aggressa est perseveret. Nulla adversario detur occasio, nulla Christo subtrahatur."

that after a rigorous trial ; whereas you may enter into holy orders at the age of twenty. The reason of this distinction is obvious.

There is now, I understand, an order of religious men, who are called the canons of St. Austin. These do not esteem themselves inferior to the monks ; yet they wear linen, and eat flesh-meat. Suppose we were to copy their example?—As to food ; consult but the book of nature, and it will tell you that, in that line, we should have few restraints. Sobriety in our sex is a virtue of constitution. The expence of our table is small, and a slender diet suffices. I have also learned from philosophy that we are not so easily intoxicated.—Macrobius observes from Aristotle : “ Women, says he, are seldom intoxicated ; old men often. “ A woman’s body is particularly moist. The smoothness “ and brightness of the skin shew it. The wine which they “ drink

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“ subtrahatur oblatio.” Hinc etiam Canones nostræ infirmitati consulentes decreverunt, Diaconissâ ante quadraginta annos ordinari non debere, & hoc cum diligenti probatione ; cum à viginti annis, liceat Diaconos promoveri.

Sunt in Monasteriis, qui Regulares dicuntur Canonici Beati Augustini, quandam, ut aiunt, regulam profitentes, qui se inferiores Monachis nullatenus arbitrantur : licet eos & vesci carnibus & lineis uti videamus. Quorum quidem virtutem si nostra exæquare infirmitas posset, nunquid pro minimo habendum esset?—Ut autem de omnibus cibis tutius ac lenius indulgeatur, ipse quoque natura providit, quæ majore scilicet sobrietatis virtute sexum nostrum præmunivit. Constat quippè multo parciore sumptu, & alimonia minore, fæminas quam viros sustentari posse, nec eas tam leviter inebriari Physica protestatur.—Unde & Macrobius Theodosius Saturnaliorum Libro VII. meminit his verbis : “ Aristoteles, mulieres, inquit, raro inebriantur, crebro senes. “ Mulier humectissimo est corpore. Docet hoc & levitas cutis & splendor. “ Docent præcipue assidue purgationes superfluo exonerantes corpus humore. “ Cum

“ drink falling upon a large body of humours, loses its  
 “ efficacy; it is weakened, and has not strength to rise up  
 “ to the brain.” In another place: “ The body of a  
 “ woman is made like a sieve: it is full of pores, for the  
 “ business of copious perspiration. By the same apertures  
 “ all liquor soon escapes. On the contrary, old men are  
 “ dry, which the roughness of their skin demonstrates.”

Be persuaded, Abeillard, from these considerations, that we may be indulged in the free use of meat and drink. There is no danger of excess. If we live continently, renounce our property, and serve the Lord, enough will be done, and we shall deserve praise for it. In other things, let us imitate the clergy, or the devout laity, or, if you will, the canons I have mentioned, who profess to follow  
 the

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“ Cum ergo epotum vinum in tam largum ceciderit humorem, vim suam perdit, nec facile cerebri sedem ferit, fortitudine ejus extincta.” Item: “ Muliebri corpus crebris purgationibus deputatum, pluribus concertum foraminibus ut pateat in meatus, & vias præbeat humori in egestionis exitum confluenti. Per hæc foramina vapor vini celeriter evanescit. Contra, fenibus siccum est corpus, quod probat asperitas & squallor cutis.”

Ex his itaque perpende, quanto tutius ac justius naturæ & infirmitati nostræ cibis quislibet & potus indulgeri possit, quarum videlicet corda crapula & ebrietate gravari facile non possunt: cum ab illa nos cibi parcitas, ab ista, feminei corporis qualitas, ut dictum est, protegat. Satis nostræ esse infirmitati, & maximum imputari debet, si continenter ac sine proprietate viventes, & officiis occupatæ Divinis, ipsos Ecclesiæ duces vel religiosos laicos in victu adæquemus, vel eos denique qui Regulares Canonici dicuntur, & se præcipue vitam Apostolicam sequi profitentur.—Magnæ postremo providentiæ est, his qui Deo se per votum obligant, ut minus voveant, & plus exequantur, ut aliquid semper debitis gratia superaddat. Hinc enim per semetipsam Veritas ait: “ Cum feceritis omnia quæ præcepta sunt, dicite: Servi inutiles sumus, quæ debuimus faceri, fecimus.” Ac si aperte diceret: Ideo inutiles, & quasi pro  
 3 P nihil,

the maxims of the apostolic age.—It is prudent in those, who consecrate themselves to God, to vow little, that they may have it in their power freely to do more.

If many, at this day, who rashly engage in a monastic life, would attend to this; if they would duly weigh the important obligations of the state, and see what their rule requires, they would transgress less through ignorance, and less through neglect. But crowding indiscreetly into the cloisters, they there live as they entered; they despise a rule which they embraced heedlessly, and in its stead follow light and abusive customs. It will become us to take care not presumptuously to engage in difficulties, under which we see so many of you sink. The world is grown old, and with it the human race has lost its pristine vigour. At least the charity of all is fallen from its fervour. Laws then, which

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nihilo, ac sine meritis reputandi, quia debitis tantum exolvendis contenti, nihil ex gratia superaddimus.—De quibus quidem gratiis superaddendis ipse quoque Dominus alibi parabolice loquens ait: “Sed, & si quid supererogaveris, ego, cum rediero, reddam tibi.”

Quod quidem hoc tempore multi Monasticæ Religionis temerarii professores, si diligentius attenderent, & in quam professionem jurarent, animadverterent, atque ipsum Regulæ tenorem studiosè perscrutarentur: Minus per ignorantiam offenderent, & per negligentiam peccarent. Nunc vero indiscrete omnes fere pariter ad Monasticam conversationem currentes, inordinate suscepti inordinatius vivunt, & eadem facilitate, qua ignotam Regulam profitentur, eam contemnentes, consuetudines quas volunt, prolege statuunt. Providendum itaque nobis est, ne id oneris feminæ præsumamus, in quo viros ferè jam universos succumbere videamus, imo & deficere. Senuisse jam mundum conspiciamus, hominesque ipsos cum cæteris, quæ mundi sunt, pristinum naturæ vigorem amisisse, & juxta illud Veritatis, ipsam charitatem non tam multorum, quam

which were made for man, must conform to the change, and be modelled to it.

I have mentioned the blessed Bennet: he so framed his rule, he says, as to make it rather an introduction to a devout life. And indeed, compared with some precedent institutes, and with the practices of the holy fathers, his injunctions, it must be owned, are easy.

What so contrary to religion and the tranquil repose of the cloister as wine? It foment the passions, it breeds dissensions, and it even can overpower in man that superior reason, by which he excels the other beings of the creation, and approaches to the nature of his maker. Wine it is, which

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quàm ferè omnium refriguisse. Ut jam videlicet pro qualitate hominum ipsas propter homines scriptas vel mutari, vel temperare necesse sit Regulas.

Cujus quidem discretionis ipse quoque Beatus non immemor Benedictus; ita se Monasticæ discretionis rigorem temperasse fateatur, ut descriptam à se Regulam, comparatione priorum institutorum, non nisi quandam honestatis institutionem, & quandam conversationis inchoationem reputet, dicens: " Regulam autem hanc descripsimus, ut hanc observantes aliquatenus vel honestatem morum, aut initium conversationis nos demonstramus habere. " Cæterum ad perfectionem conversationis qui festinat sumat doctrinam sanctorum Patrum, cujus observatio perducatur hominem ad celsitudinem perfectionis." Item, " Quisquis ergo ad cælestem patriam festinas hanc miniam inchoationis Regulam, adjuvante Christo, perfice, & tunc demum ad majora doctrinæ virtutumque culmina, Deo protegente, pervenies."—Qui, (ut ipse ait) cum legamus olim Sanctos Patres uno die Psalterium explere solere, ita Psalmodiam tepidis temperavit: ut in ipsa per Hebdomadam distributione Psalmorum, minore ipsorum numero Monachi quam Clerici contenti sint.

Quid etiam tam religioni quietique Monasticæ contrarium est, quam quod luxuriæ fomentum maximè præstat & tumultus excitat, atque ipsam Dei in nobis imaginem, qua præstamus cæteris, id est rationem delet? Hoc autem vinum est, quod supra omnia victui pertinentia plurimum Scriptura damnosum

which the scriptures so much condemn as dangerous, and warn us against its use. You know what is said in the book of Proverbs; and Jerom, in his letter to Nepotian, on the duties of churchmen, is as severe against that pernicious liquor, and all others which can cause ebriety.

Yet

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asserit, & caveri admonet. De quo & maximus ille sapientum in Proverbiis meminit, dicens: "Luxuriosa res vinum, & tumultuosa ebrietas. Quicumque his delectatur, non erit sapiens. Cui vae? cujus patri vae? cui rixae? cui foveae? cui sine causa vulnera? cui suffusio oculorum? nonne his, qui commorantur in vino, & student calicibus epotandis? Ne intuearis vinum quando flavescit, cum splenduerit in vitro color ejus? Ingredditur blandè, sed in novissimo mordebit, ut Coluber, & sicut regulus venena diffundet. Oculi tui videbunt extraneas, & cor tuum loquetur perversa. Et eris sicut dormiens in medio mari, & quasi sopitus gubernator, amisso clavo: et dices: Verberaverunt me, sed non dolui: traxerunt me, & ego non sensi: Quando evigilabo, & rursus vina reperiam?" Item: "Noli Regibus, ô Lamuel, noli Regibus dare vinum; quia nullum secretum est, ubi regnat ebrietas, ne forte bibant & obliviscantur judiciorum, & mutant causam filiorum pauperis." Et in Ecclesiastico scriptum est: Vinum & mulieres apostatare faciunt sapientes, & arguunt sensatos." Ipse quoque Hieronymus ad Nepotianum scribens de vita Clericorum, & quasi graviter indignans, quod Sacerdotes Legis ab omni, quod inebriare potest, abstinentes, nostros in hac abstinentia superent: "Nequaquam, inquit, vinum redoleas, ne audias illud Philosophi: Hoc non est osculum porrigere, sed vinum propinare." Vinolentos Sacerdotes & Apostolus damnat, & Lex vetus prohibet. "Qui altario deserviunt, vinum & ficeram non bibant." Sicera Hebræo sermone omnis potio nuncupatur, quæ inebriare potest, sive illa quæ fermento conficitur, sive pomorum succo, aut favi decoquitur in dulcedinem, & herbarum potionem, aut palmarum fructus exprimuntur in liquorem, costisque frugibus aqua pinguior colatur. Quicquid inebriat, & statum mentis evertit, fuge similiter ut vinum.

Ecce

Yet does Bennet, that spiritual man, in consideration of the imperfect character of the times, allow wine to his monks. "I could not persuade them, says he, to abstain from its use." He had read, I presume, of the great moderation of the holy fathers in the deserts. It is related that, on a time, a solemn service was celebrated on the mountain of abbot Anthony. Some wine was brought, out of which an old man filled a small cup, and took it to abbot Sifoi, who was sick. The good abbot drank of it once, and a second time. But when the old man presented it a third time, he refused it: "No, said he, brother; that's enough: don't you know that the devil is at the bottom." —There are many more such anecdotes.

As

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*Ecce quod Regum deliciis interdicatur, Sacerdotibus penitus denegatur, & cibus omnibus periculosus esse constat. Ipse tamen tam spiritualis vir Beatus Benedictus dispensatione quadam præsentis ætatis indulgere Monachis cogitur. "Licet, inquit, legamus vinum Monachorum omnino non esse: sed quia nostris temporibus hoc Monachis persuaderi non potest, &c.*

*Legerat, ni fallor, quod in vitis Patrum scriptum est his verbis: "Narraverunt quidam Abbati Pastori de quodam Monacho, quia nonbibebat vinum, & dixit eis quia vinum Monachorum omnino non est." Item post aliqua: "Facta est aliquando celebratio Missarum in Monte Abbatis Anthonii, & inventum est ibi cenidum vini. Et extollens unus de senibus parvum vas, calicem portavit ad Abbatem Sifoi; & dedit ei. Et bibit semel & secundo, & accepit, & bibit. Obtulit ei & tertio. Sed non accepit, dicens: Quiesce frater, an nescis quia est Sathanas?" Et iterum de Abbate Sifoi: "Dicit ergo Abraham discipulis ejus: Si occurritur in Sabbatho & Dominica ad Ecclesiam, & biberit tres calices, ne multum est? Et dixit senex, si non esset Sathanas, non esset multum."*

Ubi:

As to flesh-meat: where do we find that it was ever condemned by God, or prohibited by him to monks? Bennet, who was so indulgent on a more dangerous article, may well be copied here.—I wish to see a rational scheme adopted. In things that are indifferent, use no restraint. Why require duties which will not be complied with? Forbid sin, and with that rest satisfied. In food and raiment let the maxim be, to provide what is most cheap and common; to take what is necessary, and retrench the rest.

Truly, those things are of little value, which neither prepare us for the kingdom of God, nor at all recommend us to his mercy. Such are all external practices, which are common to the reprobate and the saint, to the hypocrite and the sincere christian. It was the distinction of external and internal works which made so wide a difference between the  
christian

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Ubi unquam quaeso, carnes à Deo damnatae sunt vel Monachis interdictae? Vide obsecro & attende, qua necessitate Regulam temperet in eo etiam quod periculosius est Monachis, & quod eorum non esse noverit. Quia videlicet hujus abstinentia temporibus suis Monachis jam persuaderi non poterat.—Utinam eadem dispensatione, & in hoc tempore ageretur, ut videlicet in his, quae media boni & mali atque indifferentia dicuntur, tale temperamentum fieret; ut quod jam persuaderi non valet, professio non exigeret, mediisque omnibus sine scandalo concessis, sola interdici peccata sufficeret; & sic quoque in cibis, sicut in vestimentis dispensaretur, ut quod vilius comparari posset ministraretur, & per omnia necessitati, non superfluitati consuleretur.

Non enim magnopere sunt curanda quae nos regno Dei non preparant, vel quae nos minimè Deo commendant. Hæc verò sunt omnia quae exterius geruntur, & æque reprobis ut dejectis, æquè hypocritis, ut religiosis communia sunt. Nihil quippe inter Judæos & Christianos ita separat, sicut exteriorum operum & interiorum discretio, præsertim cum inter filios Dei & Diaboli sola charitas discernat, quam plenitudinem legis & finem præcepti Apostolus vocat.

Unde



christian and the Jew. The apostle determines charity to be the fulfilling and the end of the law; and it is by this virtue alone that the sons of God are known from the sons of the devil. He even utterly annuls the value of such works to enhance the merit of faith and internal rectitude. Read his address to the Jews in the epistle to the Romans.—

He

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Unde & ipse hanc operum gloriam prorsus extenuans, ut fidei præferat justitiam, Judæam alloquens dicit: “ Ubi est gloriatio tua? exclusa est. Per quam “ legem? factorum? Non, sed per legem fidei. Arbitramur eum hominem “ justificari per fidem sine operibus Legis.” Item, “ Si enim Abraham ex “ operibus justificatus est, habet gloriam, sed non apud Deum. Quid enim “ dicit scriptura? Credidit Abraham Deo, & reputatum est ei ad justitiam.” Et rursum: “ Ei, inquit, qui non operatur, credenti autem in Deum qui “ justificat impium, deputatur fides ejus ad justitiam, secundum propositum gratiæ Dei.”—Idem etiam omnium ciborum esum Christianis indulgens, & ab his ea quæ justificant, distinguens, “ Non est, inquit, regnum Dei esca & “ potus, sed justitia & pax, & gaudium in Spiritu sancto.” Omnia quidem munda sunt, sed malum est homini, qui per offendiculum manducat. Bonum est non manducare carnem, & non bibere vinum, neque in quo frater tuus offendatur, aut scandalizetur, aut infirmetur. Non enim hoc loco ulla cibi comestio interdicitur, sed comestionis offensio: qua videlicet quidam ex conversis Judæis scandalizabantur, cum viderent ea quoque comedi quæ lex interdixerat. Quod quidem scandalum Apostolus etiam Petrus cupiens evitare, graviter ab ipso est objurgatus, & salubriter correctus. Sicut ipsemet Paulus ad Galatas scribens, commemorat.—Qui rursus Corinthiis scribens: “ Esca “ autem nos non commendat Deo.” Et rursum, Omne quod in macello vænit, “ manducate. Domini est terra & plenitudo ejus.” Et ad Collossenses: “ Nemo ergo vos judicet in cibo aut in potu.” Et post aliqua: “ Si mortui “ estis cum Christo ab elementis hujus mundi: quid adhuc tanquam viventes “ in mundo decernitis? Ne tetigeritis neque gustaveritis, neque contrectaveritis: quæ sunt omnia in interitu ipso Ufu secundum præcepta & doctrinas “ hominum.”—Elementa hujus mundi vocat prima Legis rudimenta, secundum carnales observantias, in quarum videlicet doctrina quasi in addiscendis litera-

libus

He permitted the use of all meats; it was only the danger of scandal which he advised to be avoided.—His writings every where inculcate these maxims.

And did not our Saviour himself, when he sent out his disciples to preach, use the same indulgence? If ever, caution was then peculiarly necessary: yet he told them to eat and drink whatever the hospitable kindness of their friends should set before them. It is true, Paul foresaw that the time would come, when men would depart from this discipline of his master and of himself. Thus he writes to Timothy: “ The spirit saith plainly that, in the latter  
“ times, some shall depart from the faith, giving ear to  
“ the spirits of error, and to the doctrines of devils; for-  
“ bidding to marry, commanding to abstain from meats,  
“ which

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libus elementis primò se mundus, id est, carnalis adhuc populus exercebat. Ab his quidem elementis, id est, carnalibus observantiis tam Christi, quàm sui, mortui sunt; cùm nihil his debeant, jam non in hoc mundo viventes, hoc est inter carnales figuris intendentes, & decernentes, id est distinguentes quosdam cibos, vel quolibet res ab aliis; atque ita dicentes: “ Ne tetigeritis hæc  
“ vel illa.” Quæ scilicet tacta, vel gustata, vel contrectata, inquit Apostolus, sunt in interitu animæ ipso suo usu, quo videlicet ipsis ad aliquam etiam utimur humilitatem: secundum, inquam, præceptum & doctrinas hominum, id est carnalium, & legem carnaliter intelligentium, potius quam Christi vel suorum.

Hic enim cùm ad prædicandum ipsos destinaret Apostolos, ubi magis ipsi ab omnibus scandalis providendum erat, omnium tamen ciborum esum eis ita indulgit, ut apud quoscunque suscipiantur hospitio, ita, sicut illi visitent, edentes scilicet & bibentes quæ apud illos sunt. Ab hac profecto Dominica suæque disciplina illos recessuros ipse jam Paulus per Spiritum providebat. De quibus ad Timotheum scribit dicens: “ Spiritus aurem manifestè dicit, quia  
“ in novissimis temporibus discedent quidam à fide, attendentes spiritibus er-  
“ roris, & doctrinis dæmoniorum in hypocrisi loquentium mendacium, pro-  
“ hibentium

“ which God created to be received with thanksgiving by  
 “ them who believe, and who know the truth. For every  
 “ creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected,  
 “ which is taken with thanksgiving.”

If external appearances be regarded, John and his disciples, with their wonderful abstinence and macerations, may be preferred to Christ and his apostles. They themselves seemed conscious of a superiority, when murmuring they said; “ Why do we and the Pharisees fast so much, while thy disciples do not fast?”—St. Austin is full upon this matter; and reflecting how much the reality exceeded the semblance of virtue, he boldly pronounces that external actions superadd nothing to the merit of our internal dispositions. I refer you to his writings.

#### Virtue

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“ hipientium nubere, abstinere à cibis, quos Deus creavit ad percipiendum  
 “ cum gratiarum actione fidelibus, & his qui cognoverunt veritatem; quia  
 “ omnis creatura Dei bona, & nihil rejiciendum quod cum gratiarum actione  
 “ percipitur. Sanctificatur enim per verbum Dei & orationem. Hæc proponens fratribus, bonus eris minister Christi Jesu, enutritus verbis fidei, & bonæ doctrinæ, quam affecutus es.”

Quis denique Joannem, ejusque discipulos abstinencia nimia semacerantes ipsi Christo ejusque discipulis in Religione non præferat, si corporalem oculum ad exterioris abstinenciæ intendat exhibitionem? De quo etiam ipsi discipuli Joannis adversus Christum, & suos murmurantes, tanquam adhuc in exterioribus Judaizantes, ipsum interrogaverunt Dominum, dicentes: “ Quare nos & Pharisei jejunamus frequenter, discipuli autem tui non jejunant?”—Quod diligenter attendens beatus Augustinus, & quid inter virtutem & virtutis exhibitionem referat attendens, ita quæ fiunt exterius pensat, ut nihil meritis superaddant opera. Ait quippe sic in Libro de bono conjugali: “ Continentia, non corporis, sed animæ virtus est. Virtutes autem animi aliquando in corpore manifestantur, aliquando in habitu: sicut Martyrum virtus apparuit in tolerando passiones.” Item. “ Jam enim erat in Job patientia,

Virtue alone is pleasing in the sight of God. They who equally possess it, will from his hands receive the same reward, though their actions may widely vary. It will be the employment then of the true christian to attend to his heart; there to plant the seeds of virtue, and from it to eradicate vice. What may be the shew of his actions, he will be little solicitous.—We read that the apostles, even in the company of their master, were so rustic  
and

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“quam noverat Dominus, & cui testimonium perhibebat, sed hominibus innotuit tentationis examine.” Item: “Verum, ut apertius intelligatur, quomodo sit virtus in habitu, etiam si non sit in opere, loquor de exemplo, de quo nullus dubitat Catholicorum. Dominus Jesus quod in veritate carnis esurieret, & sitierit, & manducaverit, & biberit, Nullus ambigit eorum qui ex ejus Evangelio fideles sunt. Num igitur non erat in illo continentiae virtus à cibo & potu, quanta erat in Joanne Baptista? Venit enim Joannes non manducans & bibens, & dixerunt: Dæmonium habet. Venit filius hominis manducans & bibens, & dixerunt: Ecce homo vorax, & potator vini, amicus Publicanorum & Peccatorum.” Item: “Deinde ibi subjecit, cum de Joanne ac de se illa dixisset: Justificata est Sapientia à filiis suis, qui virtutem continentiae vident in habitu animi semper esse debere: in opere autem, pro rerum ac temporum oportunitate, manifestari, sicut virtus patientiae in Petro, qui passus est, & in Joanne qui passus non est: sic non est impar meritum continentiae in Joanne, qui nullas expertus est nuptias; & in Abraham, qui filios generavit. Et illius enim Cælibatus, & illius Connubium, pro distributione temporum, Christo militaverunt. Sed continentiam Joannes & in opere, Abraham vero in solo habitu habebat.

Illo itaque tempore cum & lex dies Patriarcharum subsequens maledictum dixit, qui non excitaret semen in Israël: et qui non poterat, non promebat, sed tamen habebat. Ex quo autem venit plenitudo temporis ut diceretur, “qui potest capere capiat; qui habet, operetur, qui operari noluerit, non se habere mentiatur.” Ex his liquidè verbis colligitur solas apud Deum merita virtutes obtinere, & quicumque virtutibus pares sunt, quantumcumque differant operibus,

and ill-bred that, regardless of common decorum, as they passed through the corn fields, they plucked the ears, and ate them, like children. Nor did they wash their hands before they sat down to table. "To eat with unwashed hands," said our Saviour to those who were offended, "doth not defile a man." And he instantly added what those things were which bring defilement with them; "Evil thoughts, homicides, adulteries," &c. "these come from the heart, and they defile a man." If the mind be not previously corrupted, that is, if the will be not vicious, no actions can be bad. That is the source of evil.

If

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operibus, æqualiter ab ipso promereri. Unde quicumque sunt verè Christiani, sic toti-circa interiorem hominem sunt occupati, ut eum scilicet virtutibus ornent, ac vitiis mudent: ut de exteriori nullam, vel minimam assumant curam.—Unde & ipsos legimus Apostolos ita rusticanè, & velut inhonestè, in ipso etiam Domini comitatu se habuisse, ut velut omnis reverentiæ atque honestatis obliti, cum per fata transirent spicas vellere, fabricare, & comedere, more puerorum, non erubescerent. Nec de ipsa etiam manuum ablutione, cum cibos essent accepturi, sollicitos esse. Qui cum à nonnullis, quasi de immunditia, arguerentur, eos Dominus excusans: "Non lotis, inquit, manibus manducare non coinquinat hominem." Ubi & statim generaliter adjecit, ex nullis exterioribus animam inquinari; sed ex his tantum quæ de corde prodeunt, "Quæ sunt, inquit, cogitationes, adulteria, homicidia," &c. Nisi enim prius prava voluntate animus corrumpatur, peccatum esse non poterit quicquid exterius agatur in corpore. Unde & bene ipsa quoque adulteria five homicidia ex corde procedere dicit, quæ & sine tactu corporum perpetrantur, juxta illud: "Qui viderit mulierem ad concupiscendam eam, jam moechatus est in corde suo. Et omnis qui odit fratrem suum, homicida est." Et tactis vel læsis corporibus minimè peraguntur, quando videlicet per violentiam opprimitur aliqua, vel per justitiam coactus judex interficit, reum. "Omnis quippe homicida (sicut scriptum est) non habet partem in regno Dei."

If we be studious to please him, who is the searcher of hearts, and who reads our secrets, it is the motive of our actions that we shall be careful to regulate. The widow's mite was more acceptable than all the splendid offerings of the rich. He, who does not need our services, regards the intention and not the gift. "The Lord looked kindly on Abel and his offerings:" he saw the disposition with which he came, and he was well pleased. The disposition is more grateful to heaven, when the action which accompanies it engages less of our attention.

Let us then determine to learn christian prudence, and to imitate rather Jacob, who entertained his father with a dish of homely food, while Esau was beating the woods in quest  
of

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Non itaque magnopere quæ fiunt, sed quo animo fiant, pensandum est, si illi placere studemus, qui cordis & renum probator est, & in abscondito videt, qui judicabit acculta hominum. "Paulus, inquit, secundum Evangelium meum," hoc est, secundum meæ prædicationis doctrinam. Unde & modica viduæ oblatio, quæ fuit duo minuta, id est quadrans, omnium divitum oblationibus copiosis prælata est, ab illo cui dicitur: "Bonorum meorum non eges," cui magis oblatio ex offerente, quam offerens placet ex oblatione, sicut scriptum est: "Respexit Dominus ad Abel, & ad munera ejus." Ut videlicet prius devotionem offerentis inspiceret, & sic ex ipso donum oblatum gratum haberet. Quæ quidem animi devotio tanto major in Deo habetur, quanto in exterioribus, quæ fiant, minus confidimus.—Unde & Apostolus post communem ciborum indulgentiam, de qua, ut supra meminimus, Timotheo scribit, de exercitio quoque corporalis laboris adjunxit, dicens: "Exerce autem teipsum ad pietatem. Nam corporalis exercitatio admodum utilis est. Pietas autem ad omnia utilis est, promissionem habens vitæ quæ nunc est, & futuræ: quoniam pia mentis in Deum devotio, & hic ab ipso meretur necessaria, & in futuro perpetua."

Quibus quidem documentis quid aliud docemur, quam Christianè sapere, & cum Jacob de domesticis animalibus refectionem patri providere? Non cum Esau

of rarities. I love not Pharisaical maxims. David says: "The vows I make to thee, O Lord, are within my heart, from thence I will praise thee." And does not the poet Perſius ſay; "Ne te quæſiveris extra:"—Look not for thyſelf from home?

It would be endleſs to quote the opinions of all thoſe authors, profane and ſacred, who ſhew us the inſignificancy of outward performances. The contrary doctrine would tend to bring back Judaïſm; to ſubſtitute the works of the law, and its intolerable ſlavery, for the liberty of the goſpel, and to the ſweet yoke of Chriſt, and his light burthen. Yet our Saviour himſelf called us to this new profeſſion. We know what, in "the Acts of the Apoſtles," was ſaid to thoſe unwiſe chriſtians, who wiſhed to retain the practices of the law.

Do

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Eſau de ſilveſtribus curam ſumere, & in exterioribus Judaïzare. Hinc & illud eſt Pſalmiſtæ: "In me ſunt Deus vota tua, quæ reddam laudationes tibi." Ad hoc quoque illud adjunge Poeticum.

Ne te quæſiveris extra.

Multa ſunt & innumerabilia tam Sæcularium, quam Eccleſiaſticorum Docto-  
rum teſtimonia, quibus ea quæ ſunt exterius, & indifferentia vocantur, non magnopere curanda eſſe docemur. Alioquin legis opera, & ſervitutis ejus, ſicut ait Petrus, importabile jugum, Evangelicæ libertati eſſet præferendum, & ſuavi jugo Chriſti, & ejus onerilevi. Ad quod quidem ſuave jugum & onus leve per ſemetipſum Chriſtus nos invitans: "Venite, inquit, qui laboratis & onerati eſtis." Unde & prædictus Apoſtolus quosdam jam ad Chriſtum converſos, ſed adhuc opera legis retinere cenſentes vehementer objurgans, ſicut in Actibus Apoſtolorum ſcriptum eſt, ait: "Viri fratres, quid tentatis Deum, imponere jugum ſuper cervicem diſcipulorum, quod neque patres noſtri, neque nos portare potuimus: ſed per gratiam Domini Jeſu credimus ſalvari, quemadmodum & illi?"

Et

Do you then, Abeillard, follow Christ in his indulgent maxims; imitate that apostle, whose name you bear, proportioning your precepts to the weakness of our nature. Allow us ample time to celebrate the praises of our maker. This is the sacrifice which is most pleasing to him. He rejected the flesh of bulls and the blood of goats; but the offering of praise he accepted, and he listened to the vows of the heart.

Conclude not, however, that it is my wish to discard all manual labour, even when it may seem necessary. My meaning is, that things which regard the body, and which stand in the way of spiritual duties, should not be held in much estimation. This I can the more insist on, because in the apostolic age it was allowed, that widows and devout women should be maintained at the public cost. They truly may be denominated widows, not only who have lost their husbands,

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*Et tu ipse, obsecro, non solum Christi, verum etiam hujus imitator Apostoli, discretionem sicut & nomine, sic operum præcepta moderare, ut infirmæ convenit naturæ, & ut divinæ laudis plurimum vacare possimus officiis. Quam quidem hostiam, exterioribus omnibus sacrificiis reprobatis, Dominus commendans ait; " Si esuriero, non dicam tibi: meus est enim orbis terræ, & plentudo ejus. Nunquid manducabo carnes taurorum, aut sanguinem hircorum " potabo? Immola Deo sacrificium laudis, & redde Altissimo vota tua, & invoca " me in die tribulationis, & eruam te, & honorificabis me.*

*Nec id quidem ita loquimur, ut laborem operum corporalium respuamus, cum necessitas postulaverit. Sed ne ista magna putemus, quæ corpori serviunt, & officii divini celebrationem præpediunt; præsertim cum ex autoritate Apostolica id præcipuè devotis indultum sit sæminis, ut alienæ procurationis sustententur officiis magis, quam de opere proprii laboris. Unde ad Timotheum Paulus: " Si quis fidelis habet viduas, subministret illis, & " non gravetur Ecclesia, ut his, quæ veræ viduæ sunt, sufficiat."—Veras quippè*



husbands, but who have renounced the world. These it is but equitable the church should support. Our Saviour before his death appointed a steward for his mother: and seven deacons were afterwards chosen to attend to those good women, who were particularly consecrated to God.

Paul, it is true, writing to the Thessalonians, very severely blamed some who led a listless and idle life; he ordered that he who would not work might starve. Our holy Bennet likewise, that idleness might be avoided, enjoined manual labour. But tell me; was Mary idle, when, sitting at the feet of Christ, she listened to his words? Martha, in the mean time, worked for both, and envious of her sister's repose she murmured, as if she only had to bear the heavy burden of the day.

The same murmuring is now often heard. It comes from those who, engaged in the business of the world, are yet required to support the ministers of the altar. They complain

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quippe viduas dicit quascunque Christo devotas, quibus non solum maritus mortuus est, verum est mundus crucifixus est, & ipsæ mundo. Quas rectè de dispendiis Ecclesiæ, tanquam de propriis Sponsi sui redditibus, sustentari convenit. Unde & Dominus ipse matri suæ procuratorem Apostolum, potius quam virum ejus prævidit, & Apostoli septem Diaconos, id est Ecclesiæ ministros, qui devotis ministrarent fæminis, instituerunt.

Scimus quidem & Apostolum Thessalonicensibus scribentem, quosdam otiose vel curiose viventes adeò constrinxisse, ut præciperet quoniam si quis non vult operari, non manducet: et Beatum Benedictum maximè pro otiositate vitanda opera manuum injunxisse. Sed nunquid Maria otiose sedebat, ut verba Christi audiret? Martha tam ei quam Domino laborante, & de quiete sororis tanquam invida murmurante, quasi quæ sola pondus diei & æstus portaverit?

Unde & hodie frequenter murmurare eos cernimus, qui in exterioribus laborant, cum his qui divinis occupati sunt officiis terrena ministrant. Et sæpe de  
his,

complain less of the extortions of a tyrant, than of what they contribute to maintain those, whom they please to call lazy and useless drones. Yet they know that their occupation is, not to hear only the words of Christ, but to meditate on them, and to sing the praises of his name. Is it much to supply a few earthly goods for the many spiritual advantages given in return? And the slaves of the world shall deem it dishonourable to serve the children of heaven! Under the old law, the liberty of repose was sanctioned to the tribe of Levi. They enjoyed no landed property, that nothing might withhold them from their functions; and they were supported by the labour and contributions of their brethren.

Should you resolve, on the article of fasting, to add any thing to the general discipline of the church; I beg you will weigh it maturely, and consider how far it may be proper for us. In my opinion, the great christian fast is rather to abstain from sin.—In the distribution of our church service, and in the arrangement of our prayers, be likewise as  
indulgent

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his, quæ tyranni rapiunt, minus conqueruntur, quam quæ desidiosis (ut aiunt) istis & otiosis exsolvere coguntur. Quos tamen non solum verba Christi audire, verum etiam in his assidue legendis & decantandis occupatos considerant esse. Nec attendunt non esse magnum, ut ait Apostolus, si eis communicent corporalia, à quibus expectant spiritualia. Nec indignum esse, ut qui terrenis intendunt, his, qui spiritualibus occupantur, deserviant. Hinc et enim ex ipsa quoque legis sanctione Ministris Ecclesiæ hæc salubris ~~est~~ libertas concessa, ut tribus Levi nihil hæreditatis terrenæ perciperet, quo expeditius Domino deserviret: sed de labore aliorum decimas & oblationes susciperet.

De abstinence quoque jejuniorum, quam magis vitiorum quam ciborum Christiani appetunt, si quid Ecclesiæ institutioni superaddi decreveris, deliberandum est, & quod nobis expedit, instituendum.—Maximè vero de officiis Ecclesiasticis, & de ordinatione Psalmorum providendum est: ut in hoc saltem,  
si pla-

indulgent as you can. Oblige us not often to repeat the same psalms. Bennet, our founder, was so little opinionated, as to permit his successors, on this head, to make any changes they might chuse. In process of time, as the splendour of the church should increase, he knew that alterations might be expedient.—Above all things, we wish you so to settle our night service, that no priest or deacon be admitted amongst us at that unseasonable hour. It becomes us, at all times, to be secluded from the sight and approach of your sex. Our business is with heaven; and let us be on our guard against every danger.

It is now, Sir, your duty, while God gives you life, to make such regulations for us, as may be binding on the Paraclet for ever. You, under him, are the founder of this house: be also, with him, our legislator. When you are

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si placet; nostram exoneres infirmitatem. Ne cum Psalterium per hebdomadam expleamus, eisdem necesse fit Psalmos repeti. Quam etiam Beatus Benedictus, cum eam pro visu suo distribuisset, in aliorum quoque actione sua id reliquit admonitio: ut si cui melius videretur, aliter ipsos ordinaret. Attendens videlicet, quod per temporum successionem Ecclesie decor creverit, & quæ prius rude susceperat fundamentum, postmodum ædificii nata est ornamentum.—Illud autem præ omnibus definire te volumus, quid de Evangelica lectione in vigiliis nocturnis nobis agendum sit. Periculosum quippe videtur eo tempore ad nos Sacerdotes aut Diaconos admitti, per quos hæc lectio recitetur, quas præcipue ab omni hominum accessu atque aspectu segregatas esse convenit: tum ut sincerius Deo vacare possimus, tum etiam ut à tentatione tutiores simus.

Tibi nunc domine, dum vivis, incumbit instituere de nobis, quid in perpetuum tenendum sit nobis. Tu quippè post Deum, hujus loci fundator, tu

are gone, we may have a teacher, who will be disposed to build on another foundation. For us, we fear, he may be less solicitous; or we may be less attentive to him. Should he be willing to serve us, as you are; are we sure he will be equally capable? Do you speak to us, and we will hear. —Farewell.

*Abcillard's reply to this letter is itself a volume; I therefore cannot insert it, nor would it be read if I were. It is dry and uninteresting, as it is prolix.*

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per Deum nostræ congregationis es plantator, tu cum Deo nostræ fidei religionis institutor. Præceptorem alium post te fortassis habituræ sumus, & qui super alienum aliquid ædificet fundamentum. Ideoque veremur de nobis minus futurum sollicitum, vel à nobis minus audiendum, & qui denique, si æquè velit, non æquè possit. Loquere tu nobis, & audiemus. Vale

F I N I S.

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